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# THE CARLYLES



MRS. BURTON HARRISON

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# THE CARLYLES

A STORY OF THE FALL OF  
THE CONFEDERACY

BY

MRS. BURTON HARRISON



NEW YORK  
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY  
1906

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**TO THE MEMORY OF  
A NOBLE SOUL  
A BRILLIANT INTELLECT  
A PURE HEART**



# THE CARLYLES

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## I

**M**ONIMIA—so named from an Otway play—aged seventeen, wearing a shabby white cambric frock that threatened to fall apart through frequent washings, with a heaven of new hope in her heart because the world was so beautiful and she had slept so well, ran down the stairs of an old house in Richmond on a certain Sunday morning in April.

She found no one in the dining-room, opening upon a brick-walled garden full of blooming flowers. The mahogany furniture, frowning in shadow or twinkling in sunlight; the walls covered with dim portraits in oil and St. Memin prints of people who rather bored her because, in her father's estimation, no one ever seemed of consequence who had not worn a long busk or a tie-wig; the table set for two with china, silver, and damask that knew not stain or speck—all received a passing glance. Everything was in the order exacted by her fastidious sire. A glance at the clock showed a few moments before he would be down. She improved them by running out into the garden.



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The sun was already high, and the shade of a great magnolia-tree flaunting its luscious blossoms far overhead was grateful. The sky was deeply blue; no sound came to her ears save the call of a distant church-bell, and the footsteps of children trooping to Sunday-school along the brick pavement outside the ivied wall that shut in their domain.

Stooping to pick a Cape jasmine, and adding to it a bit of crape-myrtle from the shrub beyond, she felt a fresh wave of patriotic confidence surge in her breast. It could not be what some visiting oldster had said to her father the night before, that things looked darker than ever for their Confederacy, the object of so many hopes and prayers from the best people she knew. The four terrible years in which her youth had budded could not be coming to such an end! The strained life of continuous, excited, palpitating interest, hardship, and sympathy, which she had ardently shared with a whole cityful of people defended by a now dwindled line of distant gray soldiers, survivors of the long struggle, was never doomed to close in such galling disaster!

Mona's beautiful voice broke softly into a verse of a morning hymn. As she turned back into the breakfast-room, she drew a long breath of relief from care. Things must come out right. The sacred cause would triumph; her poor mother lying so ill up-stairs would soon recover; the price of butter, prohibitive, just now, at twenty-five dollars a pound, must fall; she and the cook and Britannicus, the butler, must, between them, be able to contrive some dish to tempt her father's appetite and satisfy their own.

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All the fears of overnight, the stress of responsibility beyond her years, the memory of the awful sights and sounds that dogged the footsteps of long-trailing war, vanished as they had done over and again before. Everything was possible in the resplendent glamour of this April morning.

"Monimia, I am waiting," called her father in his dry, croaking tones.

"Coming, papa."

She ran quickly in. He was already seated at his place, an open book laid upon the row of fiddle-pattern forks arranged, with some superfluity, to the left of a plate of Devonport china of rare paste and decoration.

"How is she? She was so still when I came by her door, I didn't dare go in."

"Old Clarissa reports your mother to have passed a fairly good night," answered Mr. Carlyle, in the slightly irritated tone of a well man who cannot pardon liberties taken by Mors or Morbus with his family.

"The doctor says one or two days of absolute quiet may carry her past the worst," answered Mona, with a sigh.

"Doctors, my dear, since Molière's time, have not lost their adaptability to what their patients expect of them. They cut as they like the stuff upon which they are at work. Your mother was always——"

Mona interrupted him, keeping down the tremor in her voice.

"Here's your coffee, sir. I'm sorry there's not a grain of sugar left."

"Coffee! Burned corn-meal and beans, rather," he

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grumbled. "Though it's a marvel how clear that woman manages to make her poor decoction. I taught her myself the fine art of coffee-making, when I returned from Vienna in '56.—What the devil's this, Britannicus?" he added, turning to survey the silver dish, with a dome cover engraved with the family arms, held at his elbow.

"Please, Marse, it's only the bacon fat, same as usual. I thought 'twould give it a kind of flavor, if I polished up your grandcestor's old cover with the family cress, to put over it. An' please, Marse, it's sizzlin' hot."

Guiltily conscious that his maneuver was in reality intended to conceal the minute supply of exuded essence of the too familiar pork, he whipped off the lustrous barrier. Mr. Carlyle helped himself with a shrug. A batch of Phœbe's celebrated corn-dodgers, yclept by their maker "scratch-backs," followed. Thus began and ended the Carlyles' customary matin meal. It was varied at dinner by boiled pork and a so-called "pudding" of Indian meal and sorghum molasses. On Sundays there were dried apples in the pudding.

Exquisite art, indeed, did old Phœbe bring to her variants of the eternal theme of bacon, molasses, and corn-meal, but the soul of Alexius Carlyle, dilettante, scholar, and gourmet, had begun to sicken at their repetition. For, apart from the fact that in ante-bellum days Mr. Carlyle's dinners and wine parties were events, even in liberal Richmond, he was of the order of bon-vivant who could detect the superior flavor of the leg upon which a partridge had slept, or the ancient Ro-

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man who could tell whether a fish had been caught above or below a certain bridge.

Mona, like the healthy child she was, cared only not to feel so hungry that she had to think about it. And that was often the case now. She saw to-day, with a natural pang, that not only was the bacon fat limited in quantity, but that the pile of corn-dodgers nestling under a damask napkin was perceptibly smaller than was common. Britannicus, perceiving her emotion from behind his master's chair, telegraphed her to be of good cheer, and upon his next trip from the pantry, presented to her a single boiled egg. Mr. Carlyle, while eating, being buried in his book.

"But mama?" whispered Mona, although her eyes sparkled with eager anticipation.

"Never you fear, honey. Dis here aig's just goin' beggin'," was the triumphant answer.

Mr. Carlyle happened to look up.

"What have you there, Britannicus? Eggs? This, indeed, is a pleasant surprise. The *œuf à la coque*, the bulwark of the Englishman's breakfast on the Continent. It is long since Phoebe has sent us any in. I think I shall relish one most heartily."

Britannicus, dolefully anticipating the sequel of the episode, retired into his pantry, leaving Mona to spring to her feet, and carry the egg around to her father's end of the table. Retreating behind her breastworks of urn and sugar-bowl, coffee-pot and cream-jug, of fluted Colonial silver, she then pretended to be enjoying her share of the treat.

"Delicious," said Mr. Carlyle, lingeringly, as he

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scraped out the last contents of the shell. "I could wish for a morsel of wheat bread, or toast, to go with it, although the negro cook is never strong on toast."

"Flour has gone up to fifteen hundred dollars a barrel, dear," said Mona, gently, then gathered her courage to observe, "I'm afraid we'll need meal and bacon, too, to-morrow, so if you can manage to let me have a little money by then——"

"Money!" said Mr. Carlyle, bitterly, "Your mother, at any rate, was a good manager. I should think you and Phoebe, between you, might contrive something. In early Rome everything from a locust to an ostrich, from dormice to the wild boar, was made the subject of a culinary experiment. I remember Martial's epigram upon the dormouse stewed with poppies and wild honey: *Tota mihi dormitur*——"

"I'm so sorry, papa," persisted Mona, smiling, though her eyes were filling. "But we haven't a dormouse or any mouse. I think the servants have eaten all there were. . . . Will you go to church with me, sir? It is almost time."

Before they left the house, Mona glided like a shadow to the landing outside her mother's door and listened. No sound came from within, but mental telepathy brought to her rencounter a strong-visaged, clean mulatto woman, in head-handkerchief and apron made of an old linen sheet, who, coming out noiselessly, gave the girl a benignant smile ill-concealing her own anxiety.

"Mammy, she's no worse?" asked Mona, breathlessly.

"I think not, honey. I truss in the Lord, not.

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But she kinder lies dreaming, an' the least sound makes her shudder-like."

"If you would only let me help——"

"No, no, honey, leave her to me and the doctor. He has hopes, strong hopes, that if we can tide her over two days more, her mind will be cleared again."

"Of course, papa doesn't know the truth?"

"No, child, the doctor thought it worn't best to disturb old Marse. It's the strain, the long strain, that's tellin' on my pore miss, and her mournin' in secret for the boy that's bin gone this three years to his grave."

"Oh, I know, I know, and yet I can laugh and be happy still! How cruel of me!"

"My lamb, it's nature in your veins. For the Lord's sake, keep cheerful! Give me them pretty posies you've bin picking, to put under your brother's picture. When she stirs again, it'll please her to see me fix 'em. There, there, my baby, dry your sweet eyes. Didn't God give you to us to be the last ray of sunshine in this pore old house?"

But it was a very sober young person who rejoined her father in the hall. Mr. Carlyle was nattily equipped, wearing a white duck waistcoat, and trousers strapped under high-heeled shoes, with a venerable blue body-coat and Panama hat, both brushed and pressed by Britannicus, in fear of instant collapse from age. Mona smiled again, as she stuck in his buttonhole a sprig of mignonette, and handed him a stick; the worn smartness of the old dandy never failed to fill her soul with pride.

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Then they passed together down the queer, three-sided marble steps with green things growing between the chinks, into the sun-checked shade made by the horse-chestnuts bordering the brick pavement.

She remembered with a pang how, three years before, their family, after the Southern custom, sitting upon those steps in the hot dusk of a summer's night, fanning themselves and thrilling at the news brought by every passer-by of a battle that, all day long, had raged along the lines outside the town. And how, just before midnight, a gun-carriage, escorted by two dusty artillerymen, had pulled up at their door, to deliver the body of Mr. Carlyle's only son, the pride and idol of the parents, who received it in their arms.

Killed in battle! An episode of every day, a tragedy of more families than they could count around them, but coming to them in a form more distressing than was common.

And, since then, the world that had seemed to stand still for a while, was moving on again, eventually. Unless people bore their private sorrow bravely, thought Mona, how could their cause succeed? Mammy Clary was right. Of all the inmates of this stricken house, it most behooved her to be cheerful.

She kept step with her father, regaling him with some droll saying of old Phœbe, some anecdote of the convalescent ward of the hospital she visited, some merry, girlish thought of her own devising. Soon the light came back to her eyes, the spring to her feet. When old Alexius looked sidewise at her out of his study-worn eyes, it was to think, with satisfaction, that

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she would soon be of marriageable age; and that when this infernal war ended, as it must, in the victory of Southern arms, she would fulfil his lifelong hope, and make a charming bride to the last of his line save himself, his cousin's son, young Lancelot Carlyle, the head of their house, now a lieutenant-colonel down Petersburg way, with Lee.

The minx was, no doubt, secretly in love with handsome Lance, though she pretended not to show it. She would take her place among the ladies of the Carlyle race as the chatelaine of Lance's home, Carlyle Hall in Goochland, up the James. The boy needed money to carry on such a big estate. Well, Alexius had laid aside enough to keep the wolf from the young people's door. After they were married, he would take his own deplorably hipped wife and rouse her up by a trip to Europe!

Nearing the center of things, it became apparent that some hidden excitement lay under the Sabbath calm. The friends they met, bowed, and passed on, seeming not to wish to discuss the usual all-absorbing topic of the army and its doings. People hurried ahead with evasive looks. No one was willing to admit to his neighbor that a grave new fear had somehow got abroad.

In old St. Paul's, one of the churches where, for four weary years, a most religious people had continually taken their prayers and sorrows before the Highest Tribunal, a sense of peace recurred to the congregation when they saw, sitting quietly in his pew, the Chief Executive of their hard-pressed nation. That the President should look pale, grave, absorbed, was nothing



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new to those daily familiar with his face. He was apparently serene and still master of his fate.

As the service progressed, a messenger strode up the aisle, presenting a note to the President, which he read, immediately arising to leave the church. Accustomed as were the assemblages in this place to swift calls to leaders, to the alarm-bells summoning soldiers to post of duty, to men springing to arms from bridal or from funeral—there was something in this act, at this juncture, like the clutch of death on a warm heart. A stir ensued—a noiseless tremor—the repressed movement of awe-stricken hundreds, uncertain where to turn. The rector, advancing to the altar-rail, spoke a few of his habitually vigorous and fervent words of remonstrance against alarm. He urged upon his people to remain for the Holy Communion, which was yet to come. His insistence and manly faith prevailed. The congregation relaxed their attitude of tense anxiety. While some nervous ones followed the President outside, most worshippers remained, reverently tranquil, in their seats. The service proceeded with solemn majesty to its conclusion. And when the benediction was pronounced, and the people, cheered and strengthened, issued again into the spring sunshine of a perfect day, they found need for all Christian courage, since it was to hear that the dreaded blow had fallen. The note received by the President was the telegram from General Lee announcing that he could hold Petersburg no longer. Already the evacuation of Richmond had begun.

In the supreme hour of trial, it must be said by an eye-witness, before whom, after the lapse of a lifetime,

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these memories arise undimmed, clear-cut, and poignant still, the sore-stricken folk who made up the population of the beleaguered city rose to the occasion nobly. Movement was everywhere, nowhere panic. The chief, begarlanded streets, sending up the perfume of flowers from many gardens, were alive with preparations for the departure of every male creature who could fight, or in any way serve the dispossessed Government. Artisans and mechanics of the Government shops, to whom had been given the option to go or remain with their families, local troops, soldiers on leave, convalescents in the hospitals, citizens who could not brook separation from their homes, thronged the way toward every available exit from the town, amid lines of wondering negroes. In almost every house there was somebody to be helped to go; some one for the women to speed upon his way; somebody for whose sake tears had to be kept back, scant food made ready, words of cheer lavished. Those women of Richmond, who had been long tried as by fire, might bend but would not break.

Between two and three o'clock in the afternoon, the formal announcement was made to the public that the Government would leave Richmond that evening. By nightfall all the flitting shadows of the Lost Cause had passed away, under a heaven studded by millions of bright stars. Farewells, like those spoken to the dying, palpitated in the air; and then came silence, dread and dreary. The sleepless city lay face to face—with what?

Except that her father's face had grown singularly grave and pinched, Mona could not discern in him any

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indication of accepting the universal belief in their downfall. In his way, Alexius Carlyle had done as much for the Confederacy, suffered as much, complained as little, as most of their friends around them. But few people credited the sharp, subacid, finical gentleman with the hot fire of partizanship that ran in his veins; still less with the stubborn hope against hope that had sustained and made him feel secure of the fortune he had invested in Confederate bonds. When they now reached home, he presented his hat and stick as usual to Britannicus, who opened the front door for them; then passed grimly into the library, shutting himself in. Mona, in her breathless emotion, turned to the old butler.

"Britannicus, you've heard?"

"Yes, Miss Mona," he said, unwillingly.

"You believe it's true?"

"Yes, miss, 'pears like it is, for sure."

"Isn't it too dreadful?" she gasped.

Britannicus, who, with his wife, Phœbe, had just been in the kitchen discussing the subject from the colored people's point of view, was hard put to it, between the rich flow of sympathy within him for his masters and the brand-new tremor of exultation on his own account. His voice was soft and infinitely gentle as he answered her.

"Don't look like that, little miss. Think of yore pa and ma, that never needed you like they need you now."

"Think of Harry's having died in vain!"

"Little miss, it's the livin' we've got to work for. Let alone yore pa and ma, there's another gentleman as

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wants your care to-day. Sence you've been gone to church we've had a visitor—a soldier on horseback, straight from the front."

"Not Lance?" she cried, joyously.

"Marse Lance, sure enough, and they done sent him up to town with a despatch for the President. He's rid hard all night, and left word as how he'll stop in here ag'in on his way back for a bite of snack."

"Oh, I wouldn't have missed Lance for anything!" she exclaimed.

The sense of her cousin's youth and virile strength once more under their roof momentarily caused her to forget impending doom.

"But what's wrong with him?" she added, quickly, reading the negro's fallen countenance.

"Wid him? Nothing, honey, bless the Lawd. Marse Lance is just his reg'lar self, let alone lookin' a little thin. Honey, do you know those young fellers in de army has been livin' on parched corn and tree shoots this past week?"

"Poor dears—what can we get for Lance?"

"We'se done touched bottom, Miss Mona. They ain't a thing left to cook wid."

"There must be," Mona said, forlornly swallowing her tears.

"Oh, my child! ain't me and Phœbe bin on our knees a-prayin' the good Lawd would send us a little morsel for you and Marse this day? We'll have to come to it, Miss Mona. We'll have to borrow or beg. We can't let Marse want food, an' Marse Lance ride back hongry to the camp."

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The blood rushed to Mona's delicate face. She looked around as if seeking help from the unknown. Her eye roved over the portraits lining their walls, of the solvent forebears who had given the Carlyles their place of high consideration in the world, and were now to see them reduced to the acknowledgment of pauperism.

Just as she was making up her reluctant mind to send Britannicus forth upon the errand of appeal to neighbors as needy as themselves, strange sounds were heard in the yard by the servants' quarters. There was a rush, a scuffle, a squawk of some feathered creature in dire emergency; an interposing movement of authority, the loud mewing of a remonstrant cat, and then old Phœbe dashed in at the rear door of the hall, a luminous joy shining upon her countenance, black as the ace of spades—in her hand a fowl that had just given up the ghost!

Almost inarticulate with joy, she explained that her fireside cat, off on some predatory excursion, had just returned, from parts unknown, bearing the trophy. She thanked God who had thus answered her prayer; she spoke, over her shoulder, words of comfort to the cat, promising him his full share of the titbit; and then, for fear Miss Mona's tender conscience might interpose inconvenient questions as to their legal right to the booty, fairly turned tail, and ran to denude it of its feathers.

Britannicus, equally overjoyed, followed his wife to their quarters. He was encouraged to further effort. The lifelong sense of fealty to the family whose chat-

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tel he was born, denounced the hoarding, any longer, of secluded treasure. Climbing up to the loft in which he and Phœbe slept, he took out from his chest, his very dearest possession, a flowered purple and gold-flecked waistcoat of damask, once given to him by his master, to be sported on Sundays and on his walks abroad. For many months, Solon Taliaferro, a skinflint deacon of his church, believed to have laid up stores of sugar and coffee, meal and bacon, had been making him offers on an ascending scale, for this admired garment. It was like pulling an eye-tooth to part with it; but, rolling it in a bandanna handkerchief, Britannicus slipped down the stairs and disappeared, unseen by Phœbe at the moment that lady's broad beam was presented as she stooped over a saucepan bubbling with the handful of corn-meal that, till the advent of the fowl, had constituted her sole reliance for their midday meal. With "Confederate polenta" and fried chicken, as she knew how to prepare them, old Marse and Marse Lance would dine like "befo' de wah"!

Let Marse Lincoln's blue boys come in and set her free if they liked, Phœbe would never know a more exultant pride than this! As she worked, she sang a loud camp-meeting hymn, challenging the ear like the blast of a joyous trumpet. Britannicus, returning, without the waistcoat, and plus a bag of beans, a slab of bacon, and six sweet potatoes, rebuked her smartly for making a noise that might reach ole Marse in the library, and make him suspicion they in the kitchen was thinking about themselves. If Phœbe could have blushed through that blue-black skin of hers, with its silvery polish, no

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doubt she would have manifested this sense of her lord's unjust rebuke. Had she fathomed the actuality of his recent sacrifice, and known that he additionally felt himself to have been "done" in their bargain, by Solon Taliaferro, under peculiarly galling circumstances, resulting from Solon's glee in the final downfall of his brother's long resistance, I am afraid even the near approach of freedom would have lacked to her its consolatory element, since Britannicus, in that waistcoat, was the equivalent, to his wife, of Apollo upon a heaven-kissing hill.

## II

**L**IEUTENANT-COLONEL LANCELOT CARLYLE, his mission in high places accomplished, came galloping up the shady street and drew rein at his cousin's door. He had given permission to his orderly, after stabling their steeds with a near-by quartermaster, to spend a couple of hours with his own people in a little house overgrown with scarlet runners in the outskirts of the town, where they had probably more to eat than in the statelier residence of the aristocratic Alexius. Dismounting and sending away his tired charger, Lance ran up the pyramidal steps he could never see without a quickening of boyish memories. His spurs rang cheerily in Mona's ears as she appeared to open the door for him.

He was a handsome, slender fellow, with a clear brown skin mantled with peach bloom like a girl's, fearless brown eyes, and hair of an amber tinge; a soft, low voice and a smile ever ready to answer provocation. Going into service as a marker, in a regiment largely made up of friends and relatives, he had quickly risen from grade to grade, had been in almost continual action since the war began, and had shaved the narrow edge of Death, as by a miracle, in a hundred daring ex-



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ploits. The old gray uniform he wore was faded and stained and torn, his boots were not mates, his gold lace and insignia were threadbare, but he sported them jauntily and with complete indifference to deficiencies. Hardship, hard fighting, and starvation had begun to set their seal upon his bright young manhood. He was thin as a greyhound, worn for want of food and sleep, in the struggle to keep body and soul together to do fit duty in the field. But the spirit within him burned still so high and clear, that even the disastrous tidings of which he had been the bearer from his chief, did not yet spell to him the word defeat. In two words, Lance Carlyle was a fair sample of the soldiers of General Lee's army in the last days before Appomattox.

To Monimia, whose friend, brother, counselor, and playmate he had ever been, the young Confederate colonel was just now the most inspiring apparition she could conceive of. Possessed of courage and endurance although she was, the moment had come when, to a feminine creature, the desire to share her burden with some one stronger than herself is all impelling.

"Lance! Lance!" she cried, brokenly. "Tell me the truth. Is this really the end?"

"Why, little cousin, who ever saw you with such a face? Give me the welcome and the heartening I've always had from you before I go back to fight in the last ditch."

"Oh! How selfish I am not to think of your greater troubles."

"That's all right, Mona. We manage to be jolly enough."

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"Don't I remember that day when I was walking down Franklin, and met the General, and he stopped his horse by the curbstone, and made me step up on his foot to kiss him, the way I often have? How he said: 'Keep bright, my little girl, keep always bright. It's that we soldiers need above all things. I come up to town to be depressed, and go back to my boys in the army to be encouraged.'"

"Don't you think it's your patriotic duty to give me the same kind of encouragement you bestowed upon the General?" asked Lance, with twinkling eyes.

She had ever been chary of caresses lightly given or taken, but, to-day, gravely lifted her lips to his. In the general cataclysm, everything unusual seemed matter of fact, and the young officer wore in her eyes the halo of their whole precious and tottering cause.

"We mustn't stop out here," she said, nervously. "I want you to help me to make papa let us into the library. Oh, Lance! he's been shut in there so long. He looked so terribly sad when we walked home from church. You are the only one who can do him good."

It was indeed a changed and pitiful figure who, upon Lancelot's solicitation, opened the door of his sanctum to admit the young people. Over the yellow of the old man's skin had come a gray pallor, and his eyes were caverns of sorrow and disappointment. He grasped his kinsman's hand, but could not speak.

"Why, Cousin Alexius," exclaimed the young fellow, heartily, "aren't you taking it too hard? Don't you think there's hope yet?"

"I fear not, my boy. I believe we've got our death-

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blow. But that's not talk for you, with despatches in your breast pocket to carry back to where men can still fight before they surrender. For me, I must just go under in the crash. I'm old and spent. I've given my son, I've given pretty much every dollar I own, and have beggared this poor child and the wife up-stairs. I'm done, I tell you."

His quavering voice broke; there were tears in his eyes. Never had either of them seen such feeling in the tough old sybarite. He walked away down the length of the dim, matted room, its walls golden and red and dead-leaf color with row after row of books, with its pallid busts, its tables heaped with papers and globes and reading-lamps. Pausing at a far window, upon whose panes unpruned ivy tapped, he stood in the oblong of greenish light the sun cast through it, his back bent, his head drooped, a monument of despondency.

"It is very sad, cousin," said Lance, gently. "But, at least, we all fare alike. If the war ends to-morrow, and I have my barren acres, and that big barrack of the Hall on my hands, I shan't know what on earth to do with them. I sometimes think my best chance will be Foxcroft, the farm Cousin Julian left me last year. I haven't seen it since I was a boy, and as it's in the debatable region, I'm not likely to get there soon. But the land was pretty good."

"Good Lord! man, don't talk of small farms; it's your duty to keep up the Hall as your father would have kept it. You'll be the only one of us Carlyles, since Harry's gone. It mustn't go out of our line." His voice quavered.

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"You have no son and I no father. We'll keep together, Cousin Alexius," the young man said, "and never forget, that if I live and Mona wants me, there'll be two to look out for you and Cousin Grace."

Alexius nodded, brightening.

"Of course, I think of that; it's my dearest hope. Mona knows——"

"It wasn't to be, till I'm eighteen, father," cried the girl, "and that's a whole year off."

"But you're pledged, you're pledged," said the old man, querulously.

"Let me have my say, cousin," interposed the soldier. "I won't let Mona feel herself coerced——"

"Mona knows I am the one to decide for her; she understands why I want the assurance now, that you will have the right to care for her future," answered Mona's father.

"Mona, will you give me that right?" said Lancelot, with solemnity. "Will you promise that as soon as I may claim you, you will take me for your husband? Don't be frightened, dear; don't tremble so. I know I'm not much of a fellow—only a played-out Johnny Reb—and you could probably do much better. But, you can trust me, don't you know you can, little girl? And that's a pretty big thing, isn't it?"

Mona, who had as yet admitted no outsider into the virgin stronghold of her heart, yet who, like most Southern girls of her age and date, had built many an air castle enshrining the real lover, was greatly overcome. She had, indeed, promised her father that when she was eighteen, she would consider taking her cousin

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Lancelot in marriage; but then eighteen had seemed as far off as the judgment day. She knew that this was her father's darling wish; she admired and believed in Lancelot and had seen no one whom she preferred to him, but—to be engaged, now! A wave of resistance swept over her. She could not force her feelings to twine sentimentally around any object. She was all for patriotism, for fiery action, for nerving and inspiring the actors in a great national drama; and had no mind for stopping to dally with love talk by the way. If Lance had been a particle less kind and grave and gentle than he was; if his eye had questioned hers less openly, she felt that she must have cried out "No" with all her might.

But certainly, circumstances alter cases, and here was Mona on the edge of an unknown gulf, facing the collapse of fortune—perhaps the sacking of the town—the rigors of imprisonment, the cruelty of a triumphant foe—all these things had been foretold by pessimists and rabid journalists. To her father, ruined in fortune and broken in spirit, her mother possibly under the shadow of insanity, she owed all that she could give, and both of them desired Lancelot for a son. What was she, what were her wishes, her emotions, beside them and griefs like theirs?

"Monimia, my dear child," said Mr. Carlyle, with unwonted softness, "if I did not know that this is for your happiness I would not urge it."

"Is it for your happiness, father?"

"The best I can ever hope to know in this weary world," cried old Alexius, pathetically.

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There was a moment of silence. Mona did not venture to glance at her suitor. Lance, who was watching her closely and sympathetically, thought he had never seen her look so enchanting. How had this little cousin, whom he had thought of as almost a child, contrived to open all her womanly petals suddenly, and standing before him in the corner of the library with its background of books and spectral busts, to become a fair and perfect marriageable maiden? He felt a sudden quickening of the pulses in awaiting her answer. Here, if the worst came, would be something to console a man, something to work for, to make life precious even in defeat!

“Is it ‘Yes,’ Mona?”

“It is ‘Yes,’ Lance,” she answered, drawing back as if fearing he would touch her.

“God bless you, Monimia,” said her father. “You have lifted a weight from me, child, and I believe it will make your mother try to get well. Perhaps I should go to her now,” and he made a movement to leave the room.

“No, no, father, don’t go now. She has just fallen into her best sleep to-day,” cried the girl, hastening over to his side and slipping her hand under his arm. “Besides, they have got luncheon ready for Lance, and it will spoil if it’s kept waiting.”

“I think not,” remarked Alexius, with a touch of his sardonic humor. “My dear Lance and Mona, this will be a poor betrothal feast for you. But Lance shall have a bottle of my old Madeira that I bade Britannicus fetch down from the garret. Bottled sunshine,

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Mr. Thackeray called it, when he did me the honor to dine with us. Not much of it left, I fear, but may's well drink it now as let the Yanks get it to-morrow."

He led the way into the dining-room, the engaged couple following at a respectful distance one from the other. Whatever Mona's tendency to cry had previously been, her sense of the ludicrous was now to be strongly aroused. There was Britannicus standing guard over a covered platter set at his master's place, his face puckered into a thousand twinkles of delight, his eyes goggling, all sense of conventional decorum thrown to the winds; even his ivories disclosing themselves in an ample radiant grin. Behind him—unheard of spectacle!—stood Phœbe, the cook, her fat person swaying with glee, looking as if she would give the world to cut the pigeonwing and be done with it!

In astonishment their master surveyed the exultant pair. Then a dark frown of disgust and pain overspread Mr. Carlyle's countenance.

"Britannicus, are you drunk or mad?" he said, haughtily. "And pray, what does that woman mean by her unseemly antics? Is it the coming of your friends the Yankees, that has turned both your heads and made you forget your places?"

Phœbe had already fled like chaff before the wind. Britannicus straightened up, looking his master full in the face.

"I could have hoped you knew me better, Marse," he said, with noble dignity, then withdrew Mr. Carlyle's chair and placed him as usual at table; afterward doing the like service for the young people.

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This little incident of harsh rebuke to old and tried servants, before the family, was so uncommon as to produce a painful pause among them. It was broken by the butler, who, with an inimitable turn of the wrist, uncovered the chief dish. There, upon mush cakes of golden brown, reposed old-time chicken, fried à la Carlyle Manor; there, opposite, were bacon and beans à la Creole, and at the sides the hot corn pone of Virginia, and sweet potatoes in Savannah style!

Lance, the warrior, Lance, the accepted suitor, uttered a polite whoop of satisfaction. Mona looked, as she felt, delighted; Alexius, who had been experiencing a sad pinch under the waistband, exclaimed in wonderment. Simultaneously the true sense of the situation flashed upon all three. Their eyes sought Britannicus, standing like a victorious admiral on his quarter-deck, his wounded feeling all gone, his face expressing only protecting satisfaction.

"Britannicus," quoth his master, "I am surprised—touched—ashamed of myself. I—beg your pardon, boy."

Britannicus knew his place far too well to answer. He only bowed and bowed again.

"And when you have taken the cork out of that bottle," added Mr. Carlyle, with perfect courtesy, "go out and tell Phœbe I beg her pardon, too."

For a little, all too brief, space of time, while knives and forks flew, and they pledged each other in golden sips of priceless old Madeira, the Carlyles managed to preserve a seeming cheerfulness. But even the non-descript sweet dish Phœbe had further evolved, and her



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cups of black "coffee"—unrelated to the Mocha and Java bean of commerce—could not prolong the hour of family reunion.

With a glance at the clock, Lance sprang upon his feet, took quick leave of his kinsman, and shook Mona's hand, declaring he had not a moment more to call his own.

The clatter of horses' hoofs was heard simultaneously in the street. His cousins went out with him to the pavement, as was the custom of the town. The old gentleman affectionately clasped his shoulders as they walked.

"And, my boy, I think I should tell you that, even if to-morrow finds Confederate money valued no more than the dust of the street, I've got a few damned Yankee securities locked away down yonder in the bank on Main Street, that may serve to set you up in stock for the Goochland plantation. They'll be all poor Mona's wedding portion, though——"

"All right, sir, but don't give up the ship yet. Trust Uncle Robert's boys to do their best for you."

Alexius Carlyle wrung the soldier's hand silently. He could not bear to say the words of dole that rose involuntarily to his lips. He fell back, leaving Mona, in her washed and darned white frock over the gracious curves of a full young form—Mona with her dark, brilliant eyes and vivid rosy lips—close to the young man's bridle rein.

More and more, Lance felt her to be a sweetheart the winning of whom was a glorious feather in his cap. He

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had meant to part with her conventionally, calmly, but instead, quite indifferent to the presence of the orderly (who, indeed, had not only been doing something of the same general variety for himself, but had witnessed any number of like tender scenes on his way through the town), the colonel threw his strong arms around Mona, held her to his quick, beating heart, and kissed her with a lover's kiss. Then, vaulting into the saddle of his war-horse, with a clank of metal, and a last wave of his dreadful old powder-stained hat, he spurred away under the bowery spring foliage of the street, leaving her trembling, crying, and redder than any rose in her garden.

All that day were such partings, and by evening the city was emptied of the chief part of what had made it the capital of the Confederacy. Over the doomed bridges spanning the chafing river, the voice of whose rapids is never still, passed the Government and its principal servants, followed by a myriad of clerks, mechanics, and motley refugees. The Libby Prison was emptied, its occupants sent under flag of truce into Federal lines. The citizens who were left in town threw themselves in sick uncertainty upon beds not to be visited by sleep, or else kept vigil behind the closed shutters and the locked and bolted doors of their desolated homes.

So lay Richmond at the mercy of her foe. And when the stars of the soft night paled, and the pink dawn of another day was breaking, were heard the long, sullen, horrible explosions of the gunboats on the James, fired to keep them from falling into Union hands. It

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was the beginning of the carnival of fire of April 3d, that was to rage and roar till nightfall; that strained the nerves and wrecked the homes and fortunes of hundreds of innocent sufferers, who might otherwise have started life anew and been saved years of grinding poverty on top of years of grinding war without loss of prestige to the retreating Government and threatened army!

With the first thunder-roll, Mona's mother awoke, giving signs of keen excitement. The nurse called Mr. Carlyle, to whom now was broken the fear they had kept from him. Once at her bedside, the invalid would not suffer him to leave it. Old Clarissa, with fear-stricken eyes, shut herself in with the married pair, bidding Mona pray God no sudden noise or alarm might come near the house.

Mona, calm and pale, gathered around her the butler, cook, housemaid, and laundress in the lower hall. Through the side-lights of the front door they saw a detachment of cavalry in blue ride by. Mona trembled like a leaf, and whatever the colored people felt, they stood in sympathetic silence. From a near-by thoroughfare came floating the majestic strains of the Star-Spangled Banner, dead for so long to Richmond ears. As it swelled in passing, a stifled scream was heard from the invalid up-stairs.

Britannicus, fully informed of current events, now told Mona that, although the occupation had been effected quietly, many citizens were applying for guards for the protection of private houses, and urged that she should go with him to the headquarters of the com-

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manding general, to secure this provision of safety for her mother.

Mona hesitated, a bitter taste in her mouth, her cheek flushing hotly. At that moment began a new terror: the thunderous fusillade of bursting shells in armory, arsenal, and laboratory, that was to make this a *Dies Iræ* in grim truth.

She ran up-stairs, followed by the old servant, to ask her father's counsel. Mr. Carlyle, coming out to them for a moment like a dazed ghost, hardly seemed to understand the force of his child's appeal, and hurried back distractedly in answer to a piteous wail from within.

Mona put her hand across her eyes and thought. Then bidding Britannicus follow, she took hat and parasol and resolutely stepped out into the surge of the under world that in time of stress a city brings suddenly to the surface of its streets. The panic of the fire, the continued hideous clamor and ominous blackening of the sky, seemed to have rid the baser portion of Richmond society of all belief in the necessity of self-control and law.

A report gained ground that the penitentiary had loosed its inmates, who were said to be at large, ravaging where they might. A mob of looters, black and white, men and women, dashing by Mona and her escort, shouting and singing hymns, carried coffins rifled from an undertaker's shop, piled high with stolen groceries, rolls of silk and stuff, boots, shoes, hats, and clothing.

Mona swerved aside from contact with the rioters, but she came to no harm. The arrest, farther on, of a

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party of negroes carrying scorched booty, who were carried off under guard by soldiers, was a rude awakening to the deluded creatures, whom the arrival of such numbers of troops of their own color had led to suppose themselves masters of the situation. Amid this turmoil were seen many sober citizens, mostly aged men, anxious women, and non-combatants, drawn into the streets by a feverish desire to know their fate. To all appearance, however, the only fear abroad was that of fire. The verdant enclosure of the Capitol Square, the focus of Richmond war life, that had seen the inauguration of Davis and the funeral of Jackson, with many another historic pageant, now swarming with Union soldiers, was the point to which all steps converged.

Every man's thoughts and gaze were centered upon the terrible spectacle to the south of it. Behind and below the classic, white-pillared Capitol spouted jets of flame reaching to the zenith, as if from a mighty caldron; waves of blinding heat and swirls of acrid smoke drifted across the square, sullyng and crisping the April green of the trees, to which were hitched troop horses stamping the young grass out of life. Soldiers kept watch over heaps of goods and valuables rescued from the burning buildings. The streets outside the railings of the enclosure were littered along the curbstones with piles of blazing papers, funeral pyres of the archives of the Confederate Government, hastily snatched by their owners from adjacent offices, and set on fire overnight. All nature seemed indelibly smirched by a torrid breath that drew ever nearer.

Not trusting herself to look right or left, Mona Car-

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lyle threaded the crowds around the entrance of the City Hall. Many a group of newly arrived soldiers gave way silently before the pale and self-contained young girl and the respectable old negro who guarded her as the apple of his eye. There was no unkind curiosity in the looks they sent after her. This was a part of the other side of war these young Northerners had pictured and longed to see.

Upon the threshold of the City Hall, Mona's hand was snatched by a friend of her mother's, coming out, a matron of high vogue in their society, now a tear-stained and pallid vision, who would have hurried by without attempting the difficult task of speech, but for the girl's query, whether or not it was safe for her to go inside and make her application at headquarters.

"Safe!" cried the poor lady. "Why, my dear, they have just killed me with kindness. As soon as they heard my husband is a general at the front, and I've five children actually without food, they ordered rations to be sent at once to me. Oh! I must fly to tell the children what's coming. But for them, I'd have died sooner than asked. You know that, Mona. You know, don't you?"

Drawing her veil over her face, the poor lady hastened away, and Mona found her hand again grasped, this time by an official of the banking company in which her father's interests were vested.

"You here, my child? I trust your father—Mona, we need all our pluck to-day. I've been to ask help to save our building down yonder. It's caught

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fire, and they're doing all they can, but I'm afraid we're done for, utterly."

He was gone, and Mona pushed on, a new shiver running through her veins. Ruined! Her father's last hope gone in the general holocaust! But, then, what was he, or she, amid so many stricken ones? Certainly, the immediate thing was to be calm and brave, and Mona felt something in her blood rise up to insure her against forgetting this. She trembled a little at finding herself in the crowded corridors of the building where the headquarters of the Union general in command of the troops doing provost or guard duty had been hastily established. Old Britannicus gave her an encouraging glance as he stepped ahead to hold open a heavy swing-door, watching her pass through it, as if she had been a little queen on her way to execution.

### III

**E**ARLY that Monday morning, the First Brigade (Devens's Division), Twenty-fourth Army Corps, Army of the James, which had been lying in the trenches at the point where the Union works approached nearest to the city, and was the triumphant first to cross the forsaken Confederate works, had led the column in the formal entry, and marched up Main Street. Near the Old Market they turned into Broad Street, and, to the music of four regimental bands played gallantly—music that carried despair into still dwellings of a dead city like Pompeii, wherein were huddled old men, women, and children turned to stone—proceeded in fine style to the City Hall, where they reported to the Major-General commanding the troops operating on the north side of the James, who had previously entered with a small headquarters force.

At 8 A. M. the Stars and Bars had been hauled down from the flagstaff above the Capitol and the Stars and Stripes run up. What this meant to captors and captured was at once lost to sight in the immediate terror of the great fire. General Weitzel had taken up his position on the platform of the high steps at the east front of the Capitol building, and there, looking down



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into a gigantic crater, suffocated and blinded with the vast columns of smoke and cinders which rolled down and enveloped the place, he assigned to Brevet Brigadier-General Edward H. Ripley the apparently hopeless task of stopping the conflagration and suppressing the mob of Confederate stragglers, released criminals, and negroes who had far advanced in pillaging the city on his arrival. His orders were to strain every nerve to save the city, crowded with women and children and the sick and wounded of the Army of Northern Virginia, orders given amid "a contest of innumerable artillery, like that which preceded Pickett's assault at Gettysburg."

Among the incoming troops were many veteran firemen of Brooklyn, Hartford, and New Haven, who, promptly set to their old business, did it cheerfully and well. Into that sea of fire plunged the brave fellows, as if fighting for their own homes. The city fire department, said to consist of two steam fire-engines, was crippled through the seizure of its horses, and until the United States Army took possession of them, these were not brought into service. The whole of the first forenoon in long-coveted Richmond was spent in a well-organized and exhausting fight by the First Brigade with the fire-fiend. Not till late afternoon was the consuming monster finally to hurl itself and break upon the stone building of the Confederate War Department, leaving in its wake ruined homes, factories, mills, banks, bridges, and the prostrated industries of a greater part of the unhappy town.

In spite of their fatigue through past marching and

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fighting, most of the men in blue wanted to be in the scrimmage. It was a climax of excitement offering an opportunity for individual experience with the townspeople that all eagerly desired. It was also a grand thing to write home about.

The man left out, indeed, was the man with a grievance. A pretty poor consolation he found it to stay cooling his heels, and remembering that he also serves who only stands and waits.

Among the more or less dissatisfied boys of Uncle Sam, not detailed for fire duty, was Private Donald Lyndsay, of the —— Volunteers. He was, although he didn't often let it come to the surface, "the ideal soldier who thinks for himself," and the sight of some of these weeping women, and men cut to the heart because they had to ask favors, tried him exceedingly as he stood around in the office at headquarters, waiting to make himself useful.

Lyndsay was a tall, lean young man, with reddish hair, a frank countenance, and a pair of singularly bright blue eyes. Born in New England, of a Scotch father, he had lived of late years under the thumb of his mother's brother, a peculiarly disagreeable mill-owner, who had no idea how to spend the money he had amassed, and no patience with any young fellow who desired more than three meals a day and a stool in his uncle's office.

Lyndsay, at the outbreak of the war, had nearly broken his heart to enter the army. He had just graduated from Yale, and because he owed the college course to his uncle, had consented to go into the mill

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and work out the indebtedness. After three years of it, he left and proceeded to enlist. His sole regret, now, was that he had not done this sooner. In his regiment there was no man who knew him as a college graduate and the reputed heir of the richest old curmudgeon in the thriving manufacturing town of Airedale in the Berkshire Hills. Donald had sworn to himself to put all that business out of sight, and did so. Now and again he would run upon old classmates of his, who had won rank and honors in the army, and the thought that, but for his uncle's pig-headedness, his career might have been alongside of theirs, would stick like a big and bitter pill in his throat. He kept away from them, maintained a cheerful spirit, found friends in the ranks around him, made an admirable soldier, practised the trade of fighting with unholy joy, and, but for the sudden ending of the war, and his own obstinate habit of holding himself in the background when it was a question of claiming reward for merit, would doubtless not have been serving as guard at headquarters in the City Hall at Richmond on the day of the occupation.

But what, Donald thought, were any one man's career or feelings, his winnings or his losses, in the face of such a grand moral victory as this they had won? Every nerve of his body thrilled with the meaning of it. From the first he had coveted the privilege of serving his ideal of the one universal flag. With all the strength that was in him, he believed the North to be in the right. The march into Richmond was no mere triumph over gallant and obstinate enemies, but the dawn of a new life for the greatest nation in the world. He had never

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known Southerners, excepting a few good fellows in college, whom he had hated to think of losing through the secession movement, but did not dream of blaming them for their course. He had no particular feeling in the matter of slavery, save in thinking it as great a wrong to the masters as to the chattels. His first introduction to life within the captured city was therefore not only of absorbing interest, but an object lesson that filled his mind and colored his imagination indelibly. Lyndsay had noticed the beautiful young girl with the proud, pale face and modest bearing, pass by him, attended by the high-bred old negro slave, whose expression of concentrated loyalty to his mistress struck him as one of the finest things he had ever seen. He was not aware of the nature of their colloquy with his young General, who, much driven and beset by one or two hysterical old women so far impelled by their panic as to pat him on the cheeks and cling to his knees, petitioning for salvation from his soldiers, had been relieved by the appearance of so self-controlled a petitioner as Miss Carlyle.

Private Lyndsay knew only that he got his orders to "go with this lady, find out what you can do for her, and do it," and that, two minutes later, he was in the wake of the pair who had so attracted him, threading his way through the turmoil of corridors, stairs, and streets, until they turned into a near-by residential quarter of the town.

Mona had not at any time felt so like breaking down. She understood why the wife of General Lester had found it so much harder to receive than to give. The

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prompt courtesy of her reception by the "enemy" had seemed overpowering. Now that the dreaded ordeal was over, her pride bled so distressingly at having been among the first to ask for protection, she would have enjoyed bursting into hearty tears. Until they passed out of the worst of the confusion, she decided she would not trust herself to look this Yankee soldier in the face. Then a better instinct came to her.

They were walking single file, Britannicus behind Miss Carlyle, Private Lyndsay behind Britannicus. Not a word had been spoken, when the girl suddenly wheeled and addressed herself to their guard.

"I am sorry to give you this trouble," she said, with a little royal nod, in the softest voice he had ever heard. "But for serious illness in our house I should never have considered it necessary or desirable. I hope it will not be for long."

Private Lyndsay bowed, snatching off his cap, then, clapping it on again, saluted gravely. Evidently she did not expect him to answer her. But he instinctively recognized that her reserve had nothing whatever to do with his modest grade in the United States service.

Truth to tell, Mona had been in the habit of cheering to the field of battle, or welcoming back from it, so many of her own kind in the uniform of privates, that the absence of insignia from his sleeve, cap, and collar affected her not at all. In comparison with some of the dear scarecrows in patched boots, of her recent intimate acquaintance, her guard's trim uniform and shining accouterments seemed quite imposing of respect. When his straightforward eyes met hers, she had read some-

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thing in them that gave her unlooked-for confidence. But all the same, she knew that it was not for a vanquished Confederate girl to be tripping up the street of her captured city, past the silent shuttered houses, in conversation with a captor. She allowed him again to fall behind, and thus the little procession accomplished its route without accident, and brought up at the door of the Colonial house in Randolph Street.

To Lyndsay, the outcome of his unique mission now became supremely interesting. When he faced the old brick dwelling matted with ivy, flanked on both sides by a garden containing tall magnolias that eloquently breathed of the sweet South; when he caught sight of the fanlight and quaint side-lights of the portal, the odd steps leading up to it, the brasses of door-knob and knocker, the decent old chocolate-colored Mammy, with tears on the furrowed cheeks between her gold hoop earrings, who bobbed low as she opened to them, he knew here was the "real thing" he had wished to see.

In the hall with a little band of scared dark people gathered at the far end, his eye was caught by dark wainscoting, with glimmering high lights; by Italian wall-paper representing vine-clad hills, castles, flowery pergolas, and volcanic mountains; by stairs going up on either side, to meet in the center in a white-railed gallery; by a lovely old swinging chandelier for oil-lamps, with domes of French crystal; by Chinese bowls of dried rose-leaves set about upon Chippendale tables—and, best of all, by a wide door at the rear opening upon the intense radiance of an old-time garden bathed in sun!

Here was a rare glimpse for him of a home of

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Southern gentry! Private Lyndsay, possessing much imagination and an eager worship of beauty, having been for days on the blind march in miserable weather until he had forgotten there was such a thing as a softer side of life, naturally felt himself in clover. Something about it all brought also to his mind the refined idealist, his mother, who had trained him in childhood to a love of nicety and a proper estimate of home. He forgot how sleepy and hungry a man may be and yet keep afoot and doing; he looked about him, his lips parted, his eyes taking in with appreciation all the nice and delicate details.

The young lady, who had run up-stairs, now reappeared with her father, a stately, saffron-faced gentleman with sardonic lips and weary black eyes. Addressing the newcomer without waste of words, but civilly, Mr. Carlyle regretted the necessity of a soldier's presence in their house, begging that Lyndsay would make himself comfortable with the limited means at his disposal, and, after waving his hand to Britannicus, with the injunction to "provide this—er—gentleman with—er—refreshments," withdrew as he had come.

Private Lyndsay had much ado to repress a smile, so greatly did Mr. Carlyle's shrinking away from him while speaking confer upon the speaker's movements a resemblance to the locomotion of a crab. But it did not amuse him that even the servants, relieved though they were by his presence, seemed to hold back from it. The old instinct of the Virginian household satisfied, to give civil greeting to the stranger within your gates, no one in the house knew what to do next. Miss Carlyle, in

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this emergency, being on the verge of herself withdrawing to the vicinity of her parents, paused, turned back, and blushed brightly as she addressed him.

"Our butler will do all you ask of him," she said. "Perhaps you will know best what is usual in these cases."

"Oh! I don't want anything," observed Lyndsay, piqued at finding himself a kind of genteel Pariah. "If you prefer it, I'll go out to the front steps and wait till they send to relieve me."

"Surely that is not necessary. It is much cooler inside, and you need rest. Pray sit down, and, if you like books——"

"Yes, I like books," he answered, bruskiy.

"My father's library is at your service," she went on, regretting that she had offended him, and pointing to the open door of the adjacent room, which had already revealed to his eager gaze treasures of antique volumes.

"That's all right. I'll take care of myself well enough."

Mona was insensibly disappointed. This drop into casual familiarity made her feel that she had gone too far.

"Then I will leave you," she said, with a stately movement that sat well, he thought, upon her fine, delicate face and frame. He repented of having so forgotten his manners while she kept hers. What could he have expected of her that he had not received? A dainty courtesy, a pathetic suggestion that even in the presence of a foe she could not forget the inbred desire



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to make him feel at ease under her roof. After all, what was he to Hecuba or Hecuba to him?

When she had vanished up the darkly glowing stairs, with their white fretwork and spiral mahogany hand-rail, an immense pity for her suddenly assailed his honest young soul. The whole vast sorrow of the stricken South seemed to be embodied in her wide-opened hazel eyes, full of unshed tears. If the first rebel girl he had met were like this, what must they be in the aggregate?

He remembered what he had heard of their pluck and single-minded devotion to the Confederate cause. He felt as sorry for her as a surgeon does who has had to maim a child.

At that moment Lyndsay became unpleasantly aware that his physical sensations revealed the strain he had been under in the advance. He was very glad, indeed, to drop down in the nearest chair, and ruminate upon the fact that in the general excitement no breakfast had come his way. The hint of the master of the house (queer old Dick that he was, that remained to his credit!) to his servant to supply "refreshment" to the guard, left a musical echo in Donald's brain. The traditions of Southern cookery arose insidiously to woo his fancy. If ever a darky woman's looks did not belie her, the fat old person, like a scared rabbit, who had kept well in the rear, was a *cordón bleu* of the approved Southern pattern. In fancy, the titbits resulting from her skill were already melting on his palate.

He was aroused from this day-dream by the butler offering him a salver containing a wine-glass and a de-

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canter of wine, together with a cut-glass tumbler of the amber water of the James. The man's face wore a look of acute mortification. It seemed as though he would like the earth to open and swallow him.

"I'm sorry not to carry out my master's orders better, suh," he managed to stammer out. "But the fact is, this here's the only refreshmen' we have left."

Something in the man's dejected tone struck a chord of sympathy in Private Lyndsay's heart. He lost no time in inquiries, and, to his dismay, ascertained that nobody in the house had tasted food that day. It was the work of a moment to write a note to his General, which he placed in the servant's reluctant hands. Britannicus had never gone forth to be whipped, but in carrying this missive he looked as if it contained an order for that chastisement.

Left to himself, Private Lyndsay, much perturbed and forgetting his own inner vacuum, walked up and down the hall, glancing in at the pictures on the drawing-room walls, until at last, tempted by their number and beauty, he stepped across the threshold and walked in to examine them.

Alexius Carlyle had inherited a goodly supply of the canvases with which every generation of the old South delighted to adorn its vacant walls. The women among them were of the usual swan-necked, long-busked variety, with almond-shaped eyes, and pouting rosy lips—pearl necklaces were as abundant as simpers and long serpentine curls—all were handsome, immobile, conventional creatures, except one, evidently of a later day.

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This represented a young and guileless maiden of perhaps sixteen. The shape and expression of the face suggested Sir Joshua's "Age of Innocence." The dark lambent eyes, the mouth like Cupid's bow, the dusky hair plainly parted beneath a string of pearls that, encircling it, continued, crossing the childish neck and white gown, might have been painted from his late companion on the walk from the City Hall.

"Ahem! My sister's portrait, by Chapman. You may see a replica of it in one of the figures in his 'Baptism of Pocahontas,' in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington," came in a croak behind him. Young Lyndsay turned abashed, to be transfixed by a pair of small, piercing black eyes.

"I beg your pardon for intruding here," the soldier said, "but it is so long since I have been inside a home, or seen a picture——"

Mr. Carlyle, thinking, with truth, that this was an unusual sort of a Yankee guard that had fallen to their lot, seemed determined to be suave. Had they met outside, on the pavement, he would not have looked twice at Private Lyndsay, but here the youth was sacred, and must be made to feel at ease.

"No intrusion," the old gentleman said, politely, in his heart relegating the nice guard, and all of his kind, to the deities who punish. "The portrait is of some value as a work of art, and besides——"

"It's the image of your daughter—I mean the young lady who brought me here," blundered Private Lyndsay, who seeing at once that he was not expected

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to make comments upon living personalities, ended by blushing at red heat.

"Hum," said old Alexius, moving away from the pictures across the matted hall into the mellow gloom of the library. "Would you mind stepping this way?"

In spite of himself, Lyndsay's eyes sparkled at sight of the riches of matter and binding on those shelves. By nature an ardent bibliophile, he knew enough to see that the collection had not been made, but had gathered like dust during several successive generations. His fingers itched to hold and handle some of his oldest favorites. It had been one of the prime causes of grievance against him in his uncle's eyes that all the money Donald could ever rake and scrape went into books.

Old Alexius, who had preceded him, halted suddenly, drawing a short, quick breath and stretching out one hand to clutch at the table.

"You aren't well, sir?" asked the younger man.

"Perfectly well," was the haughty answer. But Mr. Carlyle slipped, nevertheless, into the nearest chair, looking pale and heavy-eyed. He passed his hand once or twice over his forehead and seemed uncertain.

"If you will be so good as to call my servant," he began.

Here Private Lyndsay, not greatly accustomed to the sensation of fear, felt his knees knock together under him with apprehension at being found out in what he had sent Britannicus forth to do.

"I had a message to headquarters," he said at last,

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hesitating, "and I ventured to send your man with it. He should be back directly. In the mean time——"

"In the mean time, I should prefer to be alone," said the elder gentleman, sharply. But as he spoke, he grew to be of a greenish-gray hue, and his voice waxed feebler.

Lyndsay, remembering the decanter of wine still standing on the salver in the hall, broke away across the slippery bare floor, and was back in a moment, holding a glass of it to Mr. Carlyle's lips. While he stood ministering to the poor old broken-down rebel and outlaw against his country, as Lyndsay had, up till then, considered him, it flashed upon the soldier's mind that hunger and nervous overstrain were the cause of the collapse, which was, indeed, the case. And, at this moment, Mona stepped across the threshold, her face radiant, carrying in her hand a roll of white bread, the first she had seen for many a long month. It had been pressed upon her by Mammy Clarissa, who received it from a friend calling to pass the time o' day, to which friend it had been presented by a relative participating in the recent loot of a baker's shop. When Miss Carlyle perceived the stranger in the library, a slight frown gathered upon her brows. She had wanted to be alone to share her treasure with her parent. But Mr. Carlyle's drooping attitude, his pallid face, and half-closed eyes, disarmed her wrath. Like a mother bird she flew to him, curled her warm young arm around his neck, forced the wine and bread between his teeth, said soothing words in his ear, bidding him take heart, as her mother was now at last really better.

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Young Lyndsay, shame-faced at being witness to this little scene, backed from her presence rapidly, and, not knowing what else to do, walked down the hall and out behind, into the open air. There he paused with an exclamation of delight. What a contrast between the pandemonium of the Richmond streets without and this Virginian house garden, steeped in green shade and golden light! The grape-vine walk, ending in an arbor, was a tunnel of tender leafage, around which, in their seasons, were wont to flower roses red and white, luscious custard-honeysuckle, and the fairy trumpets of the white jasmine, lilac and syringa, snowball and calycanthus. The borders, edged with clipped box, were now flaming with spring annuals. Under the brick walls lilies-of-the-valley and violets sprang in masses. Upon trim spaces of green turf, crape-myrtle tossed its pink plumes, smoke-tree burst into rosy vapor, bridal-wreath sent up snowy fountains. Up the trunk of one of the great glossy-leaved magnolias a yellow Banksia had mounted, falling back in a glorious cascade of bloom. In the air and upon the earth, there was an overflow of flowers.

But even as Lyndsay gazed, fascinated, the blue sky above darkened ominously under the column of fire-laden smoke drifting in their direction. A burning mass of tarred roofing dropped at his feet, converting what had been a snowy pyramid of gardenias into blackened ruin. And, with that, the column began to broaden into a canopy.

The fire had turned their way! Hurrying back into the house, he espied Britannicus stealing on tiptoe

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toward the kitchen, his hands laden with paper bags, a large ham dangling from his arm. The paper bags had come from the commissariat of the United States. But the ham was a last love-token to his family from the departed Lancelot, who had purchased it from an old darky *en route* out of Richmond, and despatched it back to his hungry kinsfolk, insufficiently believing that it would ever reach them.

"A whole ham!" Britannicus remarked, surveying it with fondest pride. "An' when you think we used ter have one every day, first cut for the family, de rest never axed about— Mr. Lyndsay, suh, de General sent you these pervisions, an' there'll be mo' to-morrow. But I'm 'bleeged to tell you, suh, I'm afeard we're goin' to get driv out by de fire."

"Here, give me some hardtack to nibble on," interrupted the soldier, feeling empty to his boots. "Then take the rest of the stuff to your wife, and tell her to feed everybody, and be sure to help yourself, my man. Quick as you can, get all the blankets in the house, and show me the water tap that's nearest to the roof."

"Yes, suh, cert'n'ly, suh. The sky do seem awful dark, but the fire's a good ways off yet. Don' you think, Mr. Lyndsay——"

"Look at what's just dropped yonder in the garden. Then do as I tell you."

For an hour they worked, covering the roof with wet blankets, saturating rugs to hang at the cracked windows of the invalid's chamber, into which choking gusts of smoke were beginning to find their way. The rain of fiery particles was increasing in size and volume. The

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frightful explosions that had lulled, began again with fury. Their neighbors were working like themselves. The roofs around were black with people looking at or fighting off the fire. Mona's spirit did not flag, until a crash of glass in her mother's windows, following an unusually loud explosion, was echoed by a piercing cry from the sufferer. The girl ran and intercepted Lyndsay on the stairs.

"We must take her away—anywhere. I hate to trouble you, but if you could only help me, I'd be forever thankful," she said, despairingly. "We have a cousin who lives just outside of town, who would gladly receive her, but the question is how to get her there."

"I think I could get an ambulance detailed, but not immediately," he said, after reflection. "For the present, as the house is really in danger, would it not be well to put her on a cot that we could move down-stairs to the far end of the grape-vine walk, in that arbor where the vines grow thickest? There is but little smoke there, and the spot is entirely sheltered."

She flashed at him a grateful glance. He had not suggested consulting Mr. Carlyle, whose weak and inert condition continued. The servants assisting, they carried the invalid outside, Mona holding her mother's hand, and the mulatto nurse shielding the ghastly recumbent face with a large, old-time green-fringed parasol. Lyndsay thought he had never beheld so strange and sad a pageant under the fire-flakes and amid the drifting smoke-wreaths of the burning city.

The removal accomplished, the poor woman ceased to moan and whimper, and soon, in the purer atmos-



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phere, fell into a doze, after which Lyndsay, who gently and carefully had borne the foot of the cot, took a moment to breathe a sigh of heartfelt thankfulness.

There was work and enough of it yet for him, in directing the servants, and aiding them to carry out silver, pictures, and piles of valuable books from the house into the stable-yard. Mona, herself working like a beaver, came upon him with his arms full of her aunt's portrait, which he proceeded to set down in a bed of lilies-of-the-valley, with its face against the garden wall, with almost an apologetic air.

He was hot, smoky, perspiring, his blond skin reddened to the roots of his ardent hair. Mona, intercepting him, lifted her dark eyes to his blue ones with unaffected friendliness.

"You know I can never thank you enough," she said, "but please let me try to begin."

"Don't thank me till I've succeeded in getting that ambulance. Now, if you've had something to eat——"

"I have, thank you. Broiled ham and real coffee. Britannicus is the most wonderful old fellow for foraging. He wouldn't tell me where he got such good things, but I suppose papa——"

She bit her lip. No need to communicate their worst need to their blue-coated champion.

"But you haven't had breakfast," she resumed, "and they're keeping it hot for you in the kitchen—that white house behind the damson trees at the end of the brick walk."

"I'll run there, get a bite and a cup of coffee, and be back in a minute."

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"You don't think I mean you to eat there," she cried, fiercely. "What there is will be served to you in the dining-room, of course."

Lindsay laughed—a merry, boyish peal, most cheering in this atmosphere of fright and woe.

"You forget where I've been feeding, latterly. What luck would we have thought a hot meal in that nice old aunty's quarters after camp grub on the out-posts! Don't fret about me. I'll hurry and get something and——"

His speech was cut unceremoniously short. A burning brand hurtled through the sky above, and falling between them, grazed and set aflame the skirt of her flimsy summer gown. With an exclamation of dismay, Lyndsay fell upon his knees beside her, and forcibly extinguished it with his bare hands, afterward guiding her under shelter of the grape-vine walk. Mona was shocked to see that his right hand was scorched, and, upon his declaring that it was nothing, ran into the house, returning with some fragrant unguent of Mammy Clarissa's that, applied by her own rose-tipped fingers, had magical effect in lessening the pain. Lyndsay, submitting with a face half-proud, half-shamed, wondered which of the two remedies had been the more effective.

They set forth presently during a lessening of the general alarm and walked quickly together to the vicinity of the Capitol, to make application for the ambulance.

Here the crowd had continued to increase, and, as they waited, trying to cross a street, a Union officer riding toward them, gleaming like a sun-god in gold

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lace, reined in courteously, motioning the young lady to pass on ahead. At the same moment an old, crazed negro, white-haired and weeping, tottered out from the throng on the sidewalk, and throwing himself upon the stones of the street, clasped the officer's spirited horse around the knees, lifting up his voice in a pæan of thanks for freedom. The horse reared and plunged. The emotional and dramatic element of the African race found its vent in responses, cries, and resonant camp-meeting groans, from the crowd along the sidewalk.

The Union officer did not find the situation to his taste. He was a handsome, distinguished young man, and as his vexed eye lit upon Mona's escort, he made Private Lyndsay a quick, imperious sign to come to him, which Lyndsay, with military promptitude, obeyed.

The crowd, interested by this incident, gathered and surged around the girl. Left alone to its mercy, she had a moment of alarm, quickly ended by the approach of the officer, who, after a brief exchange of words with Lyndsay, had slipped from his saddle, leaving the soldier to disengage the clinging devotee and lead away the horse.

"Miss Carlyle! Mona! Surely you haven't forgotten me; and your father bringing you to us in Newport the year before the war?"

Mona's face lighted with delightful reminiscence. The brilliant officer was an old acquaintance whom she little dreamed of meeting here. Her father and his, a late senator and statesman of national renown, had been friends from boyhood. Young Dick Claxton, for-

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merly in the habit of running down to them in Virginia for a week's shooting whenever he felt inclined, had been loved by every one of them. It was at his home in Newport that Mona had made her one memorable, enchanting visit to the North. She had known that Dick's father was dead; that he had given up a life of ease and a large fortune to go into the Northern army, but, politically speaking, the Carlyles had tacitly agreed between themselves to try not to think of one too nice and dear to reprobate.

Then an iron curtain had fallen between the families. Colonel Claxton, in coming to Richmond, had had the Carlyles continually in mind. He knew the old man's peppery temper, and had heard with deep sorrow of the loss of his only son. The question of how to approach them had, as a fact, been bothering him night and day. And here, the chance of his getting mixed up in a sensational scene on the street with a crazy ducky—of espying one of his own men in the crowd on the sidewalk, and summoning him to the only relief that suggested itself—of having Lyndsay explain that he was in charge of a young Richmond lady who was left standing there alone—of going to the lady's rescue—had cut the Gordian knot.

Mona's face, always eloquent, greeted her old chum, Dick, as if there had been no war. Then the present immediately hemmed her in, clouded her thoughts, silenced her utterance. Full of tact, although visibly uncomfortable, Colonel Claxton made haste to inform himself of the necessity for the ambulance. While they went on to fulfil it, he talked cheerfully of other days,

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asked affectionately after her father, and declared there could be nothing too much for him to do in behalf of that lovely lady, her mother, who had shown him a thousand kindnesses, whose country house had been to him a second home, and who had always remained his ideal of gentle and gracious Virginia matronhood.

Mona wondered, as she walked beside the big, splendid young man, a being more grand and prosperous than she had seen in years, what would be her next experience in this bewildering day? The first burst of pleasure at their meeting had passed. She was assailed by the woful sense of the contrast he presented to all of her own kin and friends, the thought of whom, in their poverty and curled-leaf shabbiness, almost choked her utterance. She felt a passionate desire to burst away from Dick and speed as fast as her feet would carry her to the covert of her home. Some day, not now, they would welcome him there again. She had even a sudden, eager wish that he would leave her and restore the soldier Lyndsay, who had already seen the dreadful plight of her family, and had shared their distresses from the first.

But this Colonel Claxton did not in the least propose to do. Deeply moved by the rencounter, he intended to devote himself to her exclusively. The poor little stricken girl, blown to him by a wind of destiny, was his and no other's until he had seen her and her household safe through the crisis. His arrangements for the ambulance quickly made, he conducted her homeward with all celerity, feeling, it must be said for the dashing colonel of volunteers, rather more apprehensive as he

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approached Mr. Carlyle's house, than if it had been a rebel battery.

Richard Claxton's mind was speedily rid of any apprehension as to a truculent reception by his former friend. He found the old man sitting alone in the dismantled library, his head dropped upon his breast, his eyes dull, his face flushed, under charge of anxious Britannicus, who, standing in the rear of his master, telegraphed to the colonel (remembered well and gratefully) information in sign language, that the case was one requiring extreme measures and great consideration. Britannicus felt guilty, because he had just let his master extract from him the fact of the burning of the bank, a calamity which Mona had intended to keep back. This proved the last straw to crush Alexius to earth. Nothing remained between him and beggary. His cause was gone, the wife, whose malady he had thought a caprice, lay under the shadow of a cloud worse than death, the fortune he had put into Confederate bonds had vanished into smoke; he had not even food for his child and servants; what bread they had had, was the gift of negroes—and, last of all, Lancelot, his brave boy Lancelot, who was to be the staff of his old age, was one of an army overpowered in the last gasp; was perhaps even now lying still upon some bloody field of battle, or wounded, not wishing to survive the wreck.

The sight of Colonel Claxton's uniform entering the room had made him shrink for a moment, then try to rise in protest. When he recognized the visitor, some

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gleam of old kindness came into his eyes, and he strove to bear himself with accustomed courtesy and to talk of casual things. But the effort could not last. His physical endurance did not keep pace with it. He fell again into an armchair, nerveless, flaccid, a very shadow of the gallant little gentleman whom Claxton recalled as the best rider, the straightest shot, the most accomplished raconteur and host of his acquaintance.

Leaving Mr. Carlyle to Britannicus, Claxton hastened away, a lump in his throat and the joy of victory dulled to him. Mona was waiting outside to tell him that their family physician had been there in her absence, endorsing emphatically the patient's removal without delay to the country home, where tender care and freedom from noise awaited her. The women had prepared Mrs. Carlyle where she lay in the garden on her cot. While Mona spoke, the ambulance ordered by Claxton, a beautiful, highly polished vehicle, the like of which had never greeted Richmond eyes, with a trim driver and orderly and horses, drew up at the front door.

"I expected to go with her," the girl said, with filling eyes. "But now, since I have seen papa——"

"I wish, indeed, you might get out of all this dreadful business," returned Claxton, feelingly, "but, of course, you know best, and if your mother has that unmatched old Mammy Clarissa, she will want nothing. I'd give anything I know to ride myself beside the ambulance, but it's impossible. I might help to carry her out."

"No, no," said she, quickly.

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He divined her impulse to reveal no more affliction than he had seen, and, promising to come to-morrow, turned to go away.

"Don't think I am discontented," she said, going out with him. "Of course, I am deeply disappointed not to be with her myself. If I could be in two places, filling two duties, I'd be happier."

On the front steps, as they came up, stood Lyndsay, motionless, his hand to his cap, awaiting orders from his colonel.

Mona gave a little start of unfeigned satisfaction.

"Oh! Mr. Lyndsay has come back. Now all will go better," she cried. "You have no idea, Dick, how good Mr. Lyndsay has been to us; how very much we owe him."

The colonel, looking amused, ignored the artless association of his personality with that of a private in his regiment. Stepping down to inspect the ambulance and instruct its driver to use especial care, he was attended by Lyndsay, who asked leave to speak with him.

Mona's regretful reflection that "Mr. Lyndsay" must have been offended by her way of mentioning him, was broken by Claxton's return to her side.

"It's all right," he said, cheerfully. "They have sent an excellent driver, and Lyndsay will accompany the party instead of the orderly who's there. Since you have already had this man of mine in your service to-day, and have confidence in him, I have accepted his suggestion. He will return here this evening to report how your dear mother has borne the expedition and will remain on as guard."



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"That is more than we ought to ask," she answered, her face betraying her relief. "We have overworked Mr. Lyndsay, as it is. But I can't bring myself to refuse."

"I hate to depute it to anybody," said he, feelingly. "My dear Mona, I don't believe you half know how all this trouble of your father's has broken me up to-day. Thank Heaven, I believe the house is safe, at last. I'll come back this evening, and make sure."

"No, no, it would be better not," she protested.

He seemed unsatisfied, but wrung her hand and hurried off to duties impending, galloping away, the center of all the astonished eyes in the neighborhood, and of tongues expressing all the wonderment that the stoppage of a grand Yankee ambulance before the Carlyles' door had not already put into circulation.

Mona, whom the swift-rushing events of this day had induced to believe that yesterday was at least a week ago, stood for a moment, feeling as if the world around her was a whirling dream, and she the only real person in it. Was it here she had stood so recently, watching her Confederate lover spur away from her and the doomed city? Where was poor Lance now, and what would he think of her for consorting so readily with his enemies? Was it disloyal, wrong, unworthy of her principles, and degrading to her patriotism?

Ah, no! Lance, so just, so generous, a true soldier, who had surrendered this issue to the arbitrament of the sword, would be first to abide by the result. He knew that she was a helpless reed in the tremendous current of the hour. Above all, he would recognize that a

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Carlyle could not receive benefits and fail to acknowledge them with courtesy. For her dear parents' sake, for the salvation of their home and of her mother's reason, she would have done more than this, yet have kept her loyalty to Lance and the South intact——

“Miss Carlyle.”

A voice full of sympathy and kindness. Lyndsay had come to tell her that all was in readiness, and to bring her from the nurse the doctor's suggestion that neither husband nor child should assist in Mrs. Carlyle's removal to the ambulance.

Mona flinched. Her soul rebelled against the parting, if her judgment sanctioned it. Until her mother's illness they had hardly ever been separated. That gentle spiritual influence had been the most powerful motor of her young life. To have given up the care of her, even to faithful Mammy, had been a keen sorrow, and now the passionate love binding child and mother was to be wrenched anew. Mona had felt no such pang of surrender, save when she gave her brother to his sleep in Hollywood.

“Oh, I must go with her! I must!” she said, yearningly.

A spectral face looked for a moment from the window of the library. It was her father's, vague, stricken, bewildered. Then she saw Britannicus come and lead him away and pull the shades down.

“I will stay,” cried Mona.

Private Lyndsay looked after her as she dashed impetuously into the house and shut herself in the darkened library, with its dismantled shelves, to the society

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of the sad and forlorn old man. The young soldier felt moisture coming into his eyes, and wondered if this dreadful day were never going to end.

When Colonel Claxton called again next morning, he found a better state of things prevailing in his old friend's home. The servants, working since dawn, had restored books, pictures, ornaments, furniture, to their accustomed places. Under Lyndsay's direction, the trodden garden had been refreshed and watered, and the soft airs of another beautiful April day were blowing through open windows, bringing only from time to time a whiff of odor from the burned district.

The temper of this household reflected that of the town. In the great relief resulting from the cessation of the fire, minor miseries were lost to sight, and even the terrible underlying anxiety as to the fate of the armies was borne with quiet courage. The closing of the shops, and the failure of Confederate money to pass current anywhere, occasioned some distress, but the pacific policy of the conquerors and their stringent efforts to clear the streets of idle negroes, made the general conditions of the Occupation much more tolerable than had been feared.

Mona, in receiving Claxton, looked pale, but bore herself cheerfully. She asked him to excuse her father, who was resting in his own bedroom, and her face brightened in conveying the report Lyndsay had brought back of her mother's safe transfer to her cousin's airy home. (The old nurse, after making her patient comfortable, had come down-stairs to find the

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Yankee guard waiting under a tree for a comforting message to take back to town.) The invalid had not only borne the drive easily, but had slept well, seemingly unaware of her change and the reason for it.

"That was a capital idea of Lyndsay's, stopping behind the ambulance to fetch you the last news," said the colonel, approvingly. "The fellow's really a good sort and has all the instincts of a gentleman."

"A gentleman? Do you mean that he is not one?" exclaimed the girl, flushing quickly.

"My dear Mona, I mean nothing. I know absolutely nothing about the man more than I know of the rest of the regiment. Professionally speaking, he's first-rate. I might live a thousand years in our present relations before I'd find out his social status."

"It is different with us. Some of the noblest men and greatest heroes of our side have been privates, and we've honored them all the more for it. Their colonels were often their friends and relatives, and watched over them affectionately. You can't expect me, Dick, ever to look down upon a man because he doesn't wear little gold straps on his shoulders," she exclaimed, with spirit.

"Go on! I'm glad you're getting your blood up," he answered, good-humoredly. "It's more like the sprightly Mona I knew first. What if I tell you that I am actually expecting a lieutenant's commission for your *protégé*—one that I applied for some time ago, to reward him for distinguished gallantry in action——?"

"Did you? How glad I am!" she cried, then remembered herself and bit her lip.

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"I did, honestly. The thing's only been blocked by our advance on Richmond, I fancy."

"Oh, what do I care for that!" exclaimed the girl, pettishly. "I think you are cruel to remind me of it."

"A thousand pardons. I fancied your interest in young Lyndsay——"

"I do care for him to have what he deserves," she cried, torn by conflicting feelings.

"Then we'll just both hope he'll get the commission, and dismiss Lyndsay from our thoughts. See here, Mona, I've received in the past from your father much more than I ever repaid. I've stayed in his house for weeks, used his horses, guns, dogs—oh! you don't know how much I owe him. Now, don't be proud with me. Let me be your banker. Take this purse."

"Oh, but we don't need anything, now!" she exclaimed, artlessly. "Since yesterday we've had such a windfall. It seems that a merchant in town, who was behindhand in a debt he owed papa for things from the plantation, sent us lots of supplies when he closed his store. If you could have seen how my poor, dear father enjoyed real coffee, condensed milk, and lump sugar, and actually butter for breakfast, you would have been glad. We are doing splendidly, I assure you. I feel almost tempted to ask you to take a meal with papa and me and Mr. Lyndsay."

The colonel looked surprised, not only at the conjunction of rank and no rank in selection of her dinner guests, but at the recital of the Tale of the Honest Merchant, compounded, incidentally, by Britannicus to cover the fact that Lyndsay was drawing rations for the fam-

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ily from the new Government, without reference to certain delicacies purchased and paid for by the young soldier, unknown to his fellow conspirator. Upon taking his leave, the colonel called up Private Lyndsay for an interview of investigation on the front porch. Exactly what passed between them has not transpired, but it is inferred that the guard received instructions to enlarge the Carlyle's bill of fare, not at the Government expense. Claxton was only too glad thus to free Mona of the necessity of gratitude, and Private Lyndsay also rejoiced, because of the exceeding paucity of his own resources under circumstances so impelling of generosity.

While episodes like these were making history and defeating the first rancor of enmity in the town, the salute of thirty-six guns announcing the advent of Abraham Lincoln on a visit of inspection of the prize he had secured, brought a fresh thrill to the inhabitants of Richmond. Mona, startled by the firing, left her father to go and inquire into it of Lyndsay, who had been reading in the hall.

She saw negroes massing themselves along the sidewalks, and heard a far-away sound of cheering that came ever nearer. In answer to her query, Lyndsay, who had sprung to his feet, turned, with a look on his face she had not seen there before, eager and reverent.

"Perhaps you won't wish to go outside?" he said. "It is our President."

"Our President! Not mine!" Poor wounded Mona wanted to cry aloud. The hot blood coursed into her cheeks; tears came in a ready gush. "My President is

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wandering afar, driven from his home, his high place, bearing upon his poor shoulders the weight of our whole country's sorrows and everybody's sins!"

She held her place in the open doorway in proud silence; and then, following outriders, an ambulance came into sight, drawn by four horses, within which sat a grave, pale, large-featured man in civilian's black, who, holding upon his knees a wondering small boy, bowed, without smiling, right and left to the negroes who hailed him as their deliverer.

With all good and proper feeling for his young charge and hostess (who was, indeed, transforming many of his ideas at lightning speed had she only known it), and also for the sincerity of the political sentiment she stood for, Donald Lyndsay could not at this juncture restrain his own private and particular emotion. More than any other conspicuous figure on the Northern canvas in the war, he had honored Lincoln. He believed him to be possessed of highest purpose and noblest sense of responsibility, in all his actions and impulse toward the South. He now thought he read upon his hero's solemn face, not triumph but sorrow for the pain he brought in his wake. Private Lyndsay, stepping to the edge of the curbstone, drew himself up rigidly, saluted, and when Lincoln and his escort of thirty cavalrymen had flashed by in the swift trot of their horses, took off his cap and uttered an irrepressible hurrah.

When he turned around Mona had vanished, and he did not see her again that day. The next morning she came to him asking him to excuse her for showing such

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bad temper, saying she could not help it, and had cried all night.

"Some day you will see this visit means Union and Liberty," he answered, and she left him again, darkling all over her bright young face.

In spite of the favorable news that continued to come from their invalid in the country, Monimia carried that week following the Occupation the heaviest burden of her life. Her father was in a nervous melancholy, sitting for hours alone, interested in nothing, repulsing her efforts at companionship, declining to see Colonel Claxton and all other visitors. They had no news from Lancelot, further than the general information of the surrender of General Lee. At last some friends from the army, straggling back dejectedly to their homes in Richmond, told her that Lance had survived the fighting, had given his parole with the others at Appomattox, and was believed to have set off on a journey across country on horseback, to visit some property of his own till now within the United States lines.

All this perplexed Mona, and made her feel more than ever lonely and dependent upon herself. She was sure Lance had written, and that the letter had miscarried in the confusion of the hour. When her father showed so little desire for hearing about his boy, she knew how serious his depression was. In spite of the increase of palatable food, she ate little, and at night spent many hours awake. Friends of the family, who, in the ever-kind spirit of Richmond, thought of her troubles amid their own, came to offer service, but to all



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she gave the same quiet, self-controlled answer, that she wanted nothing and was doing very well. Colonel Claxton, seeing that his visits were rather an embarrassment than a help, stayed away; it was due to this fact that Lyndsay was left to look out for the little household, after the actual need for it had passed away, Claxton exacting from the young man frequent bulletins of their condition. He did not need to enjoin watchfulness. Nor had it required this accident of war bringing the Colonel and Lyndsay into closer touch, for Claxton to be struck with the real quality of his young soldier, quietly content to hold his present grade. He had long ago noted Lyndsay's superiority in manner, temper, and education, and upon the opportunity given by a special act of gallantry in action, had, as has been told, taken steps toward his promotion, which he awaited with some impatience, while keeping to himself his secret and sentimental fancy for the man.

Now, it happened that Lyndsay, having been found by Mr. Carlyle deep in an old volume of the classics, favored by that gentleman's fastidious taste, was led into making some comments thereupon, and ended by offering to read aloud to poor purblind Alexius, who, at first, merely suffered him to do so. In the course of the reading, the old scholar roused up, sniffed the air like the scriptural war-horse, charged into the fray, made a correction here and there of Lyndsay's pronunciation, and was soon thick in discussion of the text. After that first hour, Mr. Carlyle's eyes wore a temporary brightness; he ate and was pleased to compliment one of Phœbe's strawberry soufflés. Later, he dropped back

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into gloom and inertia. But the literary experiment, superintended with thankfulness by Mona, had proved one inviting early repetition.

She left her charge, one afternoon, taking a restful nap, and stole out, as she thought, unobserved, to a service of prayer, one of the frequent episodes of Richmond in captivity. On this occasion, a small congregation, composed chiefly of women wearing mourning or somber colors, met in the venerable Monumental Church. The gloomy old pile, wherein shadows lurk that ages cannot stir—the scene of the burning of the Richmond Theater, early in the nineteenth century, enshrining the monument to its victims—is at all times a haunt of sad thoughts and eerie fantasies. For the present service, the dusk of its ample space contained but a handful of visible worshipers. To the active imagination, under the circumstances, and amid the general suppression of emotion, every other seat in the interior seemed to be occupied by the ghost of a lost hope.

There was no choir, no organ. The voice of the clergyman might have come from beyond the veil, so sad it was and fraught with tremulous feeling.

By order of the Federal authority, the prayer for the President of the Confederate States had been forbidden to be read in public. Although the ritual of the Episcopal Church for Evening Prayer does not contain the collect in question, at a certain period the voice in the chancel ceased. For a few moments there was dead silence. All present understood what that silence meant. At its close, sobs and tears from the kneeling women arose irrepressibly, poignantly, above the reading of the

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remainder of the prayers. The clergyman, arising, gave out the hymn,

When gathering clouds around I view,  
And days are dark, and friends are few.

This hymn had been a favorite in the latter days of the war, and was sufficiently familiar, but the reading of its lines was followed by an extraordinarily affecting interlude. One voice after another took up the attempt to raise the tune, and dropped out, quenched by emotion.

Mona, making a strong effort to steady herself, sang it and sang alone. Over the bent heads of the mourners, the strain rang out full and true. As she voiced the words:

Thou, Saviour, see'st the tears I shed,  
For thou hast wept——

her singing was lost in a summer tempest of women's tears, in turn overpowered by the blare of a passing military band.

As the young girl left her pew, upon their dismissal, hand after hand grasped hers in silence. The congregation melted away in sorrow too deep for words.

To her astonishment Mona found awaiting her at the entrance of the church the solitary figure of Donald Lyndsay.

He had never ventured to join her on the street, on the few occasions when she left her father. As he now did so, with a look in his eyes giving her the assurance

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of full understanding and sympathy, she knew that he had been present during the service.

They walked, without speaking, back to the house. The surprise and satirical glance of a lady who passed the ill-assorted pair, nodding coolly to Mona, and shrugging aside at the soldier, struck Lyndsay with a most unpleasant pang.

It awakened him from a fool's paradise. The realization of what was indeed between them came like an electric shock, for he now recognized his love for Monimia Carlyle, and that he could no more expect to win her than the sea can reach the moon.

#### IV

**F**OR three days the armies had traveled westward, fighting as they went. Lee's attempt to gain a safe stronghold in the mountains beyond Lynchburg had been disputed at every step by an enemy—his equal, in gallant endeavor, but well-fed, well-clothed and nerved to daring by the early prospect of success. From the latter days of March to the fifth of April there had been incessant battles and skirmishes, marches and countermarches, over sodden fields and miry roads, through swollen rivers and across dense woodland; in hunger, cold, and dark uncertainty, along a way strewn with dead and dying men, with abandoned guns and burning wagon trains. No time was there for the cheering bivouac, the camp-fire of rails, the jokes and stories, the munching of hard fare, and finally, such restful sleep under the stars as seasoned veterans know how to snatch and enjoy. The Army of Northern Virginia, driven and harassed by Sheridan's cavalry, staggered by want of food, in the failure of their provision train to meet them, moved desperately but steadily forward, with a determination that never flagged. The whole spectacle of this final hard-fought retreat presents, on both sides, one of the most stirring in-

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stances of the valor of the American soldier written in history. In its disastrous wake fell ten thousand soldiers in blue, and of the men in gray there were double as many, killed, wounded, or missing.

But it is always the story of the man behind the gun that most thrills the heart. What the officers on the Confederate side of that last magnificent endeavor felt, individually, has been written as follows by one of them:

“We had been marching and fighting without intermission, with only two nights’ rest in the ten days. After Five Forks, the retreat continued night and day; the enemy with his large force of 12,000 mounted men impeded our advance, hung on our flanks, attacked our rear, burned our trains, and captured our stragglers. But the army still moved on—without stores, with hunger doing its work, and the loss of rest gradually sapping the strength of the strongest among us. To this add mental strain upon brain and nerves, and you can realize how many, like myself, seemed to be walking in a kind of waking nightmare. With every faculty stunned, all anxiety as to safety, all fear, all hope was gone, except that the present might prove a horrid dream, from which we would soon awaken. Many sank from sheer exhaustion, many deserted to their homes; but there was still an heroic band that fought, sometimes without organization or officers, when the enemy’s charge was checked by rattling musketry from straggling infantry or driven back by grape and canister at short range from our isolated and unsupported artillery.”

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On April 6th, Lieutenant-Colonel Lancelot Carlyle, having duly caught up with his command, shared his regiment's galling defeat at Sailor's Creek. By evening of the 8th, with the spent remnant of his brothers-in-arms, he reached Appomattox Court House, still believing that a last rally of their forces under Lee might save the Confederacy. Nightfall of April 9th saw the final crash of the last atom of illusion. That afternoon, General Lee—a splendid military figure, erect, stately, attired cap-a-pie with the exquisite nicety and precision that had distinguished him since his West Point days, and had made him a cynosure of elegance among his neighbors around Arlington—wearing his full-dress uniform, embroidered gauntlets, and sash, had ridden away from camp for the surrender to General Grant, bearing with him the broken hopes of his conquered army.

It was over—the tremendous four years of war, entered into by the flower of the South with such valorous gaiety of spirit, during that spring time in Virginia, when first the air was vibrant with the calls of trumpets, the rumbles of guns and caissons, and the roll of drums, when first the Stars and Bars took the April wind with daring!

Since then, a thousand miles of American soil had been shaken by the tramp of soldiers, stained by their life blood, scarred by their graves. The bosom of the Mother State that had borne the brunt of it, had also to sustain the anguish of the first surrender of Confederate arms.

Wretched as he had never been in his buoyant life

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before, exhausted, overstrained in nerve and heart, Lancelot Carlyle spent the night after the ending of hostilities wrapped in his blanket on the ground, sleeping as though only the Last Trump could awake him.

With morning, and the distribution of Confederate rations captured by General Sheridan and conceded by General Grant to the vanquished troops, he tried to assemble his scattered faculties and decide what the future held for him. After all, when the sun shines bright, and a man has youth and strength and an unmaimed body, and, over yonder in Richmond, the sweetest little girl in the South has promised to be his bride, the world is not all black! Shaking off his despondency of over-night, Lance penciled to Mona a scrawl bidding her take heart for the present, since he was well and would rejoin her as soon as possible after achieving a visit to Foxcroft, where he had decided to try for a livelihood as a farmer.

This opportunity, furnished by the end of the war, was the first he had had to investigate the property coming to him upon the demise of his cousin, the late Mr. Julian Carlyle. He knew the place only through a visit in childhood, when it had seemed a boy's paradise for gunning and fishing. No ancient estate of many acres, exacting slave labor to make it profitable—but, as he vaguely remembered, a snug little farm near the Potomac, surrounding a forest lodge filled with books, rods, and guns, wherein one might live in comfort and earn a support to meet moderate expectations. He felt sure Mona would be quick to understand his taking immediate steps to settle down to this work before getting un-



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der the influence of her father, whose high-flown notions of fealty to ancestral lands might plunge the young couple into some futile attempt to build up the Goochland place on nothing.

Many times his letter to her had been interrupted by the men of his command, who adored their young leader and could always count on a kind word from him, coming like lost children to ask his advice about what to do after giving their paroles. Many of these lean brown veterans were going back to poor, little, war-ravaged homes, wherein half-naked, hungry wives, mothers, and children were crying for them and for bread. Up till now, they had resisted the pressure of home letters, more dangerous to the army than the bullets of the foe. Some were fortunately free to strike out for themselves. All were as bare of money and goods as when they came into the world. When these soldiers talked of what they were returning to, Colonel Carlyle saw the unusual spectacle of tears in eyes that had looked steadily along gun-barrels, and the nervous tremor of hands that had been calmly slaughtering their brothers for conscience' sake, since the war began.

The same conditions prevailed among the officers. Smarting under defeat, some of them resolved to abandon their native land and go to offer their swords to foreign service. Those compelled by family necessity to take up life again where they were, felt helpless and bewildered. They speculated unceasingly as to what rights would be accorded them by the United States laws, what hold they had on their own belongings, what possibility awaited them of a livelihood under the new *régime*.

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When the stress of that sickening time made Lancelot familiar with the dreary outlook of some of his best friends in the service, he felt that he would be a craven indeed, to chide Fate for his share of the general dispensation.

Many who had gone forth with him were spared the humiliation of return. It is told how a sergeant of a Virginia company of the Stonewall Brigade, that had been swept away to the last man, continued to read aloud the list of men dead and absent. His own "Here," answered to his own name, "was the sole response to the ghostly roll-call" !

A Texan, one of Hood's old brigade at second Cold Harbor, remarked placidly about his company: "Thar ain't but one non-commissioned officer and eight men left us. To tell the truth, thar ain't another good killin' in it."

Thus the curtain fell upon Appomattox, and the beaten Confederates trooped homeward. "The Cause" had vanished in thinnest smoke.

In the wake of Lincoln's assassination, the region on either side of the Potomac near Washington became a vast hunting-ground for suspected people. Not a wood or swamp—hotbed of malaria though it be, with its undergrowth of dank vegetation, sought only by creeping things and the hunted coon fleeing from wet-lipped dogs—escaped the vigilance of searching cavalymen. On the Virginia side, every fishing-hut and hamlet, every weather-beaten farmhouse and roadside tavern, barn and corn-crib, was ransacked by secret service men.

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Dwellers in regions where the telegraph was not, were made rudely aware of the state of things by domiciliary visits of scant ceremony; going back to their beds or hearthsides, mortally afraid, thenceforward, to answer a knock or give aid to any fellow-being no matter what his need.

It was a terrible time—a gruesome time—and more than one innocent person fell a victim to its inflamed conditions. Lancelot Carlyle, on his way into this dangerous territory, lost some days through the laming of his horse, and had to tarry in the house of a family buried in the pine woods, to whom news of the national calamity had not yet come. He did not, therefore, actually hear of it until in the neighborhood of Foxcroft, within a few miles of his destination.

The great news came to him first from some loafers, sitting a-tilt upon split-bottomed chairs, on the porch of a cross-roads grocery draped with a cheap United States flag, in mourning.

Lance had stopped there, for the double purpose of making sure he was on the right road to Foxcroft and of filling his haversack with supplies for use upon arrival. The men looked with incredulity upon his astonished dismay over their intelligence of the murder of the President. They were decidedly suspicious of his request for a newspaper containing particulars, and the storekeeper, a surly German and recent settler in those parts, before furnishing him with what groceries he required, demanded to look at his parole.

Suppressing his impatience, Lancelot showed the paper, which, passed from hand to hand of the curious

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group, was the subject of evident disfavor; and while his parcels were being made up, it occurred to him to ask whether a certain family of Dares, dimly recalled at the moment, were still neighbors of his cousin's isolated house. The effect of this simple query took him by surprise. The loungers sat erect, nudged each other, and one of them answered, meaningly:

"Guess you'd better not ask loyal Union folks any questions like that, stranger. Thought you corn-feds 'ud surely know all they is to tell 'bout them rip-roarin' secesh, the Dares, as was druv out o' these parts first-off in the war. Most rebs have hearn tell o' *her*, I reckon."

"Lucky for ole man Dare, he died arly in the scrimmage," observed another, more good-natured, countryman. "Guess he'd a had his hands full trying to boss *her* doin's among the rebels. And the boy wuz just *her* stripe. Say, stranger, if I wuz wantin' to keep out o' mischief hereabouts, I wouldn't own to knowing any o' them Dares. Or befo' doin' so, I'd take speshul pains to cut my rebel buttons off."

"Reckon he'll have to be gettin' himself a new coat befo' long, anyhow," put in a sarcastic loungeur, himself a thing of patches and tobacco stains, while the others laughed derisively.

Carlyle, his face reddened with wrath, touched his horse with the spur and rode away at speed. It was some time before he could recover his equilibrium of temper. His thoughts, during the last hours of following a country road, on either side of which landmarks, remotely familiar, began to loom up before him, were deeply tinged with blue. Apart from the recent dis-

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pleasing episode, he was oppressed by the awful new menace to the unhappy South, and deeply anxious as to its result.

But on reaching the boundaries of his own property, he became conscious of a throb of hope for the future. In his heart there was left no enmity. The constitutional theory of the right of secession having been fought out and defeated, there assuredly remained to him the right to snatch his salvation from the wreck; and this he was honestly prepared to do. Why, then, should he personally fash himself? Why not take what cheer remained to him?

Dusk was falling when Lance halted before the old red gate leading into the Foxcroft estate. As he fumbled with the loop of grape-vine holding gate and post together, his eye was caught by a stack of chimneys at some distance down on the far side of the road, rising black against the red of the western sky among the pines of a wooded ridge.

In a flash it came to him that this was the home of the suspicious Dares. The family, its individuals and their surroundings, so long out of his mind, came back to him distinctly. He had gone once with his kinsman to spend the day with them—a long, full, Virginia day, arriving early and stopping late. After the midday meal, while the gentlemen discussed over their cigars the duel between Randolph, of Roanoke, and Henry Clay, the mistress of the house had invited young Lance and her own children to go out into the paddock and see her break a colt—a feat accomplished by the slim, dark lady with notable success. He remembered having thought

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Mrs. Dare a sort of Joan of Arc, who, if called upon, would lead armies and walk calmly to the stake.

The girl—he fancied they named her Cecil—was a valiant little spitfire. She had offered to fight Lance, because he said her twin brother was “a sneak.”

“Which he certainly was, if my memory serves me, the youngster!” the Colonel went on to reflect. “But a handsome devil, and fairly worshiped by that game sister of his.”

Here, the red gate opened, heavily sagging through a recently made groove in the earth. As far as he knew to the contrary, nobody had inhabited the house since it had been vacated the year before. A long-existing legend that Foxcroft was haunted by the spirit of a former occupant, poisoned by a negro slave woman, had, indeed, been the best assurance Lance could have had of the safety of its belongings after his cousin's death.

There was no further indication of disturbance of the soil. His way led between neglected fields, through an old wood road running amid a thick forest of oak and beech, sweet gum and dogwood, where tree-frogs were already beginning their night-song, and, from afar, came the note of a lonely whippoorwill. He started forward at a gallop. It would be a relief to be well out of this weird tunnel of greenery, and, after passing through another gate, to be striking into the remembered avenue of hoary locusts leading to the house.

Lance came up in a Tam-o'-Shanter run before his own front door. The house was shabby, steep-roofed, overgrown with creepers that hung in a matted curtain over the porch of entrance. In the roof arose two queer

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dormer windows like owls' ears. As he pushed aside the drapery of vines to enter, a bird flew into his face, a hare ran across his feet. The door was locked, and no sound answered his knock. Leaving his horse tied to a decaying rack, he made good his failure to enter otherwise, by opening a window and vaulting lightly across the sill. The method had for him some of the zest of boyish exploration, and he landed inside with delight.

Lance found himself in the old "living-room," well-remembered for its free-and-easy ways and customs, its bounteous meals, its walls lined with books and guns and fishing tackle, its roaring wood-fires, and the way dogs and negro lads had forever stalked in and out of it. The shell was still there, unchanged, although all life had fled. Looking around him at the plain, massive furniture, the young Colonel decided that a man with a sensible wife might do worse than set in to housekeeping at Foxcroft as things now were, adding a few feminine comforts to make Mrs. Lancelot feel at home. Even the pewter, china, and glass of the bachelor's table service were in their old places. A little airing, sweeping, dusting, and he could ask nothing better. If there were only some one to perform these offices! He thought regretfully of the kind, thriftless darkies whom his cousin Julian had, of old, allowed to run the house, and wished they were back again. He remembered to have heard they had been all started over to the District of Columbia by the terms of their master's will, each with a small sum of money in his pocket. How he wished one or two of them had remained to jolly up his solitude!

Crossing the hall, he continued his researches in the

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spare chamber, where he had once slept long ago, his eccentric cousin occupying a sort of huntsman's bunk in a rough annex back of the living-room. To Lancelot's surprise, he found his old quarters swept, garnished, and eminently habitable. He recognized the high tester bed into which he had loved to bound from off the carpeted steps leading up to it, to the cozy heart of a linen-draped mound of geese feathers; he admired the beautiful carved columns and headboards, the red damask curtains matched by those hanging stiffly at four small windows. The dark furniture, the black-framed prints upon the wall, had not changed their places. All was the same, but he could not tell why the room looked and smelled to him as if it had been lived in recently. The impression was immediate and strong, but the effect not unpleasant. He could only be thankful to those who had preceded him, whoever they might be.

To the eyes of a tired wayfarer, who for months had slept upon mud or moss or frozen mire, under rain or snow-drifts, the present accommodations for the night seemed palatial. His spirits went up with a jump; he put himself no questions, but after sallying forth to provide for his horse in a stable not totally devoid of equine comforts, returned joyfully to build a fire in the gaping throat of the spare-room chimney.

To aid in this purpose, he found even a pile of dry hickory logs, with "fat wood" kindling, in a basket on one side of the hearth. He also saw that the bed of ashes, neatly swept under the old iron dogs, was clearly of far later date than the year before.

Some visitor had been lately at Foxcroft—perhaps



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a man of law, acting in his interest; certainly a being of forethought, whose absent shade he blessed!

When the flames, licking around his pile of hickory and pine, met together above it, in a glorious swirl of golden radiance, Lance had the sensation of feeling cheered to the marrow of his bones. By the time the embers had begun to drop, and he further discovered in a corner cupboard a clean outfit of cooking utensils, the poor ex-rebel rubbed his hands with glee. That lawyer fellow had known how to bivouac in style! After a dash outside to fill his kettle at the well, the Colonel proceeded to cook and eat the most satisfactory of suppers that had perhaps ever fallen to his lot.

Ah, what a brand-new sensation this, of being dry, well-filled, and sumptuously housed after a long day's march! His ambitions for the moment were quite satisfied. He felt happy, hopeful. He laughed aloud at thought of his late discouragement.

The evening wind rustled softly in the oak branches over his roof-tree. Were those the flying-squirrels of his boyhood that performed such acrobatic feats upon the shingles? In the beautiful silence of the woods that closed him in, he could hear the movements of wild creatures who loved their solitude as he did his.

This was home—a poor thing, but his own!

Ah, no! a brave man knows not the word “discouragement.” It is only the weakling who cannot rise after the wave has dashed him down.

Planning his future, he felt sure that the problem not only of existence, but of success, would soon be solved for him. He had survived the storm; he was young and

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strong, and had all his powers. The white wings of Peace seemed even to flutter alluringly, her rewards to glitter more brightly than those of war.

Presently he lighted a pair of candles upon a stand near-by, and took up a book some one had read and left there. It was one of the earlier novels of Dumas, *père*, full of the rollicking joy of a young man's living. It amused him well until, overpowered with sudden drowsiness, he extinguished the light and dropped, dressed as he was, upon the bed, to fall instantly dead asleep.

He had no watch, no knowledge of time to guide him. When he awoke, suddenly, a few hours later, it was to uncertainty as to where he might actually be, but with a full consciousness that some one beside himself was in the room.

Looking out between the bed-curtains, he saw a young woman in a riding-habit, standing upon the threshold of the open door, holding a small lantern in her hand.

She was tall and admirably made. Her first action, after stepping inside and closing and locking the door, was an essentially feminine one. Setting the lantern upon a chest of drawers, before a tall, dim mirror, she took off her hat and shook out impatiently a stream of blond hair that had been swaying half-knotted in her neck.

Lance had never heard of a ghost of her sex at Foxcroft. Before he could formulate any supposition concerning her, his visitor had retwisted her locks and coiled them upon the summit of a charming head. Then, breathing a distinct sigh of womanly relief, she crossed

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the room to the fireplace, and discovered the remnants of his fire!

Lance saw her start and shudder back most humanly, seizing her lantern to retreat. He noticed in her right hand the gleam of a small pistol, snatched quickly from her belt.

Before she could move farther, he stood quietly facing her. One glance at his shabby uniform sufficed to relax her tense attitude, and banish from her face its expression of mortal fear.

"Whoever you are, I'm certain you're not here for harm," he said. "Please let me assure you you need be afraid of no inconvenience at my hands."

"Oh, thank God!" she cried. "If you knew what I feared——"

"Never mind that now. Sit down and compose yourself. It's impossible you can be here alone?"

"Oh, but I am! No one in the world is responsible for my coming but myself," she protested, eagerly.

"I'm not asking you that. Is it you who have been stopping before me in this room?"

"I have been here—once. I—knew the owner—I know the neighborhood," she said, evasively. "But is it possible you can be——"

"The man to whom Foxcroft now belongs? Quite possible. I am Lancelot Carlyle. But first—you are tired and chilled. Let me light the candles and kindle up the fire."

Ignoring the fact that she panted and fluttered like a bird new-caged, he drew together the charred fragments of the logs, and insinuated between them some

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bits of resin-saturated pine. Immediately a splendid glow filled all the room. Ashamed to be revealed in it, the girl dropped into a chair and hid her face in her hands.

"This is hardly gracious," Lance said, smiling.

"It *is* foolish. You could not know me," she declared, bravely disclosing to his gaze a beautiful fear-smitten countenance. He saw that her alarm had been of no common order. A young woman who could invade alone an isolated, deserted house at midnight, was possessed of more than the ordinary nerve of her sex. It had been some terror of character indefinable, that, at sight of him, had dilated her bright eyes and blanched her firm round cheeks.

He proceeded to warm up the coffee he had previously made, to toast and butter some biscuits and broil strips of bacon, giving her time to recover her self-possession.

"Soldier's fare," he said, over his shoulder. "But you are evidently a veteran in adventure. Please," he added, turning back, "taste these, now, to oblige your chef."

As she ate and drank and warmed herself at his bidding, gradually the color came back into her face, a girlish gleam into her eye.

"There were things to eat in that little cupboard," she said, pointing to a corner. "But not so nice as these. Canned things, which I detest."

"Now for your horse," he said, "for I am sure you have ridden far."

"Oh, Starlight is all right!" she answered. "I

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turned her saddled into the stable. She's accustomed to find her own stall. I fed and watered her not an hour ago, Mr.—no, Colonel Carlyle, isn't it?"

"I was so, till Appomattox," he said, bitterly. "Now, nothing."

"Don't say that. More than ever to me a hero in such defeat!" she cried. "I am going to put your trust in me to a sharp test. I owe you every explanation. I can give you none."

"I accept, if I must, the reservation. And now, clearly, the best service I can show a young lady under your circumstances, is to turn out and let her sleep in comfort till to-morrow morning."

He went over and unlocked the door.

"You are too generous. I would not consent to 'turning you out,' but that I *must* be in this room alone for a little while."

"Surely not too generous to a sister in arms who has fallen upon such hard luck. Perhaps by daylight you will feel more communicative. Colors seen by candle-light, you know——"

She interrupted him hastily.

"By daylight I shall be far away. The only favor I dare ask is that you won't inquire who I am, or what I do here. If all goes as I hope, this will be my very last visit to Foxcroft. But I think this much is due to you, Colonel Carlyle. You are not entirely a stranger to me. I know I can trust your forbearance. Upon the business that brought me here to-night, hangs something so vast and terrible—a further calamity so appalling to the poor ruined South——"

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Lance drew a quick breath and gazed at her in dismay. She did not lower her eyes that met his with a strange intensity.

"Then, for God's sake, why are you mixed in it?"

"Not for myself," she exclaimed, blanching at the hint of displeasure in his looks. "Always believe that, I beg of you. But, oh! I daren't say more."

He stood appalled. But her face and manner had in them nothing that fell short of truth. She, at least, had done no foul thing, nor touched it with lightest finger-tips. It was cruel that a beautiful young girl, with slender, rounded form and lips meant for kissing and consoling, should be driven thus under the shadow of black suspicion.

"Now you must leave me, for I am very tired," she exclaimed with a womanly gesture of fatigue, "and I have still my chief work to do."

He hesitated, then offered her his hand. She took it frankly, while they stood for a moment together upon the hearth. Accustomed though Lance was to the happenings of a war in which women had been often called on to play foremost parts, this stranger piqued his curiosity and interested him more than any one had ever done before.

They were about to separate, when a blow struck upon the shutters behind the drawn curtains of the room, caused them to spring apart and gaze at each other in dismay.



REMEMBER, whatever happens, you will trust me," she whispered, with white lips. "I will at least try," he answered, half-smiling to put heart in her, though his hand felt for his pistol.

The front door of the house was burst open with a resounding crash. The hurry of heavy feet passed through the hall, and two Union soldiers, led by a man in ordinary clothes, came into the room.

They were mud-splashed and spent with hard riding. Their breath came short and the gleam of eager triumph was in their eyes.

The first impulse of Lancelot Carlyle was the one that had carried him often through many a tighter squeeze than this. He measured his opponents with a dangerous glance, his nerves and muscles strung for action.

"May I ask, gentlemen," he said, smoothly, "to what I am indebted for the honor of this unseemly call?"

He was answered by the man in plain clothes, a burly, tobacco-chewing individual, with porcine eyes and a strong negro accent.

"Well, Johnny Reb, I reckon the best you can do is

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to ask no questions, but just come along with us as soon as we've searched these premises. But we won't part you from the lady. Seein' she's got a horse ready waitin' beside yourn in the stable, we'll just take her, too."

A quiet and perfectly even voice spoke in Lancelot's ear. To his utter surprise, a white hand was slipped within his arm.

"You'll hardly do that, gentlemen," said the strange young woman, with a little laugh, "when you know that my husband carries General Grant's parole and that he has just arrived to-day to take possession of his new home."

She glanced into the detective's face appealingly, her eyes unconscious as a child's.

"Paroled Cornfed, is he?" said the man, evidently taken aback, while Lancelot remained rigid under the light but firm control of the woman's touch. "Look here, sis, nobody asked you to put your oar in, but the devil himself can't get the bit on a gal's tongue when she's a mind to be a-gabblin'."

"You know your Government told them all to go straight home and set to work," she interjected, gaily.

"That's all right, but, Johnny, it's you I'm a-talkin' to. If you're what your wife says, I reckon you've got papers to show for it, and if not, you'll have to tell me what you're a-doin' here."

With fingers that burned, Lancelot took from his pocket the parole given him at Appomattox. He longed to speak plain truth and be done with it, yet held his tongue.

Drawing back into the light of the candles, the de-



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tective examined the paper narrowly, whistled, showed it to his men, scrutinized the pair under suspicion, then uttered a discontented grunt.

"Seems like I bin barkin' up the wrong tree, don't it? If you're Lancelot Carlyle, then you're second cousin to old man Julian Carlyle that I worked for heah, befo' the war, overseein' niggers an' runnin' the farm for him. My name's Timothy Dollar, 'n' I was bawn and raised over on the banks o' Rappahannock. Would be thar yet, I reckon, but that I've got a gal, an' she was kind o' restless livin' in the country, so I went up to Wash'n't'n and took to the secret service biz. 'Twas on account o' me knowin' the country so well they put me onto this here jawb. Look here, suh, ole man Carlyle allers did the square thing by me, and was good to my little gal. I'm goin' to put it to you fair and honest. Air you reely Lancelot Carlyle?"

"To the best of my knowledge and belief, I am," answered Lance, the grasp upon whose arm tightened convulsively.

"And you've just got to Foxcroft?"

"A few hours ago."

"You didn't know, when you came heah, that your house had lately bin occupied by other parties? Answer, on your life."

"Certainly I did not."

"Oh, now! when are you gentlemen going to stop this nonsense?" interrupted the girl, coquettishly appealing. "I think the least you can do, Mr. Dollar, to make up for interrupting us on our very first evening, is to drink to our health and happiness."

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She talked fast, with the intonation of a spoiled Southern belle. Loosening her hold on Lancelot, she went over to a cupboard on the inside of the chimney jamb, and, with some ostentation of delay in finding them, took out a black bottle, with glasses, which, after supplementing them with the pitcher of water, she placed coquettishly upon the table.

For the first time a relaxation of muscles visited the anxious countenance of Mr. Dollar, divided between baffled professional zeal, admiration of a pretty girl, and loyalty to the family of his late employer. The two German soldiers, heretofore imperfectly *au courant* of affairs, saw, at last, what was agreeably clear to their understanding.

"If I only had some mint, I'd make you one of my best juleps," said the young woman, while gaily serving them. "I'm sorry to say, Colonel Carlyle and I have just eaten all the food there is, for to-night. But there's a tin of biscuits left in the cupboard, and some potted beef——"

"No supper, I'm 'bleeged to you, marm," returned Dollar. "We got a bite a little piece down the road from Port Royal, an' I reckon we'll just be gitten' to work ag'in."

His further utterance was impeded by a portentous swallow of whisky but feebly adulterated with water. His soldiers followed suit. Then Mr. Dollar's voice returned to him in jovial cadence.

"You see, friend Carlyle, I consider myself reel obligated to your cousin, and so does my gal, Jooly. He giv' her what eddication she has, an' she's powerful peart

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to learn. Many's the time he's told me this property would go to you, when he kicked the bucket. When things git settled down a bit, I'd be pleased to give you a hint or two 'bout workin' the farm to make it pay. It's run behind, o' course, but a man could live off it—yaas, suh, he could live."

"That's all we're asking now, Mr. Dollar," answered Lancelot, with a touch of his usual bonhomie.

"Oh! with a smart stirrin' wife like yourn, Colonel, you'll surely hit it off. Here's wishin' you and her good luck; an' no bad blood between us if I *did* mistake you for the dangerous young devil we're sarchin' for."

Whatever Lancelot would have answered was snatched from his lips by the girl.

"You aren't going, Mr. Dollar, without telling us who that mysterious person is?"

"Cert'nly, marm, it's natteral you'd like to know why we broke up a honeymoon, for that's what I take it to be with you and the Colonel here. But in my biz we don't explain, we act. There's too much mischief abroad these days to tell secrets. If we'd a bin lucky enough to catch that one—and one other—a woman, but not a young creetur like you, though she looks so on first sight—I don't want to giv' you an unpleasant shock, but, as the sayin' goes, they'd a danced on nuthin', sure as God's in heaven."

His speech, beginning jocularly, ended in a grim and sinister whisper.

The two soldiers seemed to reflect his mood.

"Make your mind easy," said Lancelot, to bridge a shuddering movement that ensued. "No matter what

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has been, no criminal shall find shelter here again, I promise you. And now, Mr. Dollar, since we can furnish you with nothing in your line——”

“Well, ez I says, I reckon me an’ my men’ll be lookin’ elsewhere,” rejoined Dollar, regaining his cheerful tone. “Of course, Colonel, you understand it’s our duty fust to search this house and barn, an’ I’d prefer for you and the madam to set down quietly here till we’ve done it.”

Lancelot dropped into a chair, where the firelight and candle-light fell full upon his handsome, open face. The girl quickly came up behind him, and now stood with one hand upon his shoulder, upon which he felt a slight nervous pressure, but she spoke no more.

“Certainly, Mr. Dollar; no doubt you know the place better than I do,” answered he, pleasantly.

“Then, so long, Colonel; so long, madam! As the feller says in the play ‘I hope I don’t intrude’! Whenever you want my advice about the crops, Colonel, here’s a card that’ll reach me in Wash’n’t’n. May we meet in happier times!”

They were gone, leaving behind them an abominable reek of whisky and onions and the sweat of hard-ridden horses and hard-riding men. While the jar of their footsteps continued to wake echoes in the silent house, until after the clatter of their horses’ hoofs had receded in the woods, neither the seated man nor the standing woman moved, although the hearts of both were thumping fiercely.

Then the girl wavered, tottering, and he, arising,

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placed her in his chair. She was ghastly to look upon, her face and lips colorless, her whole body beginning to shake as if palsied.

He saw that she dared not lift her eyes to him. He heard her murmur piteously:

“Oh, forgive—forgive!”

“You are asking much,” he said, coldly.

“It was my last hope,” she stammered, her gaze eagerly entreating.

“For whom have you done this thing? What is involved in it? Who are the criminals? What is their crime?” he asked harshly.

“It was the madness of partizanship that inspired those I have tried to save. What was meant will never be accomplished now, but—there—what does it matter? If the ones those men sought had been here, instead of us, they could never, never have been saved from a horrid fate. Oh! I can’t delay a minute longer what I came here to do.”

She darted to the cupboard back of the chimney-breast, feeling in it till she brought out a canvas-lined envelope containing letters and papers.

“I saw that these were in there when I went to get the whisky—hidden under a loose board. God! will they burn fast enough?”

She had stooped, casting the packet upon the bed of red-hot coals. It caught, browned, crisped, curled at the edges, retained for a moment its shape, although of a glowing, transparent red, then fell away forever into nothingness.

Even this was not enough to satisfy her desperate

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eagerness. She seized bits of kindling, stirred with them the ashes of the papers, held them under the logs till the pile broke again into leaping, crackling flames, and every corner of the chamber was made light as day. In the glare her face and figure were to Lancelot instinct with new and effulgent beauty. Beside the emotion she created in his veins, all other impulses of life seemed glacial.

"Whatever you've done that's rash and daring, you are a brave, true woman," he cried. "You've had a frightful ordeal. It's my place to ask your pardon, and I do, most heartily."

"No, no, I have taken an unforgivable liberty. I can never look you in the face again," she said, seating herself exhausted, for a moment's rest. "All I can do now is to leave you, the sooner the better, you will say."

"Leave me? Never!" he cried, hotly.

"But I must," she said, restraining him by a glance.

"No. If you want to be alone, it is I who will leave you. Should you require the whole house, I will take my blanket and sleep outside—beside my horse—anywhere!"

"Colonel Carlyle, listen to me. I have already involved you in shameful suspicion, of which, perhaps, the end has not come yet. This I deeply, overwhelmingly regret. I shall remember and blush for it to the last day of my life. It was the impulse of a despairing moment, not only in the protection of those most dear to me, but to save the South from another cruel wrong."

"The protected ones include an actual husband, I

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presume?" he exclaimed, with an unreasonably jealous pang.

"That I will not answer," she said, coloring vividly. "Since your safety lies in knowing nothing whatever about me."

"But I must know. I accept all risks. At least tell me if you are married?"

"Did I not just confess as much to good Mr. Dollar?" she cried, with a flash of mischief.

In the great relief she had experienced, something of merry, dauntless womanhood came back to her. Lancelot's look of masculine annoyance at being thus kept at bay, seemed even to afford her satisfaction.

"You cannot go now, at this hour, in this darkness. It is improper, impossible," he said, striding about the room.

"I cannot stay here. It is improper, impossible," she answered, firmly.

"Then I'll ride away anywhere, so long as it's far enough. The house is yours till you choose to vacate it."

"No, you must understand I came here solely to get those papers, and to destroy them at any risk. To have accomplished that, no personal sacrifice seemed too much of an effort. But, before daybreak, I must be back where I came from, unsuspected."

"Let me ride with you."

"On no account. You should never be seen with me. If you are the gentleman I've trusted in, you'll not try to find a trace of me. I know my way, and my mare is a darling, who would carry me safely to the world's end."

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"Should you meet any of the gentry who've just called on us?"

"They're on another tack, that party. I fear next to nothing now. If all goes well, the whole of the mad enterprise I've spoiled will fall crashing down like a card castle. I shall suffer for it in one way, but I can stand that—after a few days I shall breathe free again. For then, I and—the causes of my anxiety—will be no longer in this hemisphere. Please let that suffice for you."

"You ask too much. No man could let a woman ride out in the night unprotected——"

"But I'm not just an ordinary timid girl," she interrupted. "Our border women, nursed by war, have had more than one experience ruder than this to carry with them into peace times! Besides, the habit of adventure's in my blood. If you knew—but you can't know—there, I'll stop talking. I must be off."

"This is but a poor ending of it all for me," said Lancelot, unwillingly fascinated by her beauty and frank speech.

"What can I say to repeat my thanks? But for you, at this moment I should have been condemned to lifelong misery and shame—" She stopped, shuddering.

"It was nothing. Any man would have done it for a brave girl in such distress. Remember, I am relying upon your solemn word, that in the disgraceful business you hint at you had no share."

She blushed deeply. A sob caught her breath.

"Not I—and oh! Colonel Carlyle, I swear to you it



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is over now. Over, I tell you—nothing can come of it. It's like a loaded shell dropped into water. I shall sleep henceforward and not be weighed to earth by fear and humiliation—unless," she added, stung by a sudden thought, "it could in any way react on you."

"I don't know, nor can I guess, what your mystery is, but my hands are, I think, sufficiently clear of that kind of thing," returned Lancelot, smiling. "The record of one of Lee's soldiers up to the date of the Surrender, and since, ought to be easy enough to read."

"But—but—the idea tortures me. I am losing my nerve, I think. If—the lie I told—were ever to inconvenience you, I could never be happy again. I would slave on my knees to atone for it."

"You said I am not entirely unknown to you. Tell me who you are—let me see you somewhere again, and I'll more than pardon you."

He spoke with fire. She drew suddenly away from him, and crossing the room took her plumed hat from the chest of drawers where she had laid it on coming in, and, standing before the dim mirror, put it on, looking, it occurred to Lance, like some pictured cavalier of the time of Charles I.

Her determined avoidance of him, her self-control and careful speech had, however, their refrigerating effect. The whole thing began to assume an unreal air.

He watched her settle her hat in place, while uttering a little exclamation of annoyance that she had not got it straight; saw her feel that her belt and pistol were in order; then turning again to him with a calm air of finality, she held out her hand.

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"Good-by, Colonel Carlyle. Don't even come with me to the stable, please. Stay just where you are, go to sleep again, and think me a bad dream!"

"This is all?" He could not help upbraiding her. "You leave me like this when, but a few moments since, you clung to my arm and called me——"

"What it shall be the study of my life to live down," she interrupted, demurely courtesying, and was gone. As the heavy mahogany door closed after her, its cold panel ill supplied the place of her breathing loveliness. He started to follow her, but held back. For the first time it dawned upon Lancelot Carlyle that it was not fitting for poor little Mona's affianced husband to be in pursuit of a distinctly adorable, strange young woman, who, worse luck, had given him every proof that she wished to avoid his future acquaintance. He sat down again before the fire, obstinately staring into the coals. The midsummer madness, engendered by the hour, strange circumstance, and her extraordinary charm, was over. He frowned, his jaw became set and rigid at thought of his own fatuity. He heard the departing gallop of her horse over the soft wood road without wishing to follow her. Then, at last, the underlying menace of the whole adventure forced itself baldly upon him. He had let himself be used as a cloak for what conspiracy, had forever fastened upon himself the odium of what acted lie? He reviewed every incident of their conversation, trying to convince himself that no gentleman would have acted otherwise than as he did; he had some shamefaced moments in recalling how his blood had coursed quicker beneath the velvety touch of her

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hand on his arm or shoulder; and, through all, kept wondering how she could be justified in asserting a previous knowledge of his identity.

In Virginia, where men of a certain class may in general trace out a family friendship or even a remote connection without stretching too fine a point, this claim of antecedent familiarity with a newly made acquaintance does not take one unduly by surprise. But while Lancelot, too thoroughly roused and excited to think again of sleep, racked his brain with speculation, only the first gleam of dawn through the windows brought the solution of the mystery. His fateful visitor could be none other than Cecil Dare!

How curiously it came back to him—her features, the turn of her head, the dauntless look out of her eyes. She had grown beautiful with womanhood, perilously so, he realized to his cost. But she had never lost the child's limpid purity of gaze any more than the old, impetuous spirit of self-sacrifice in defense of one she loved. Then, he put beside this recollection of her, what the men at the cross-roads had said about the Dare family—their cynical advice to him as to the notorious mother and brother!

The right clue surely! The old, old story! It was they, her unworthy relatives, whom Cecil had been shielding! Lancelot saw again her flaming blue eyes and crimson cheeks, her flying golden locks, her look like a youthful angel at the gate, when the little girl stepped before him and gallantly threw down the gage of battle to her brother's accuser.

At this point, fatigue and sleep took matters into

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their own hands. Stumbling wearily over to the bed, he fell upon it like a log.

Broad sunlight streamed through the faded red of the curtains when Lancelot awoke. The trees shadowing the house were alive with the cheerful song and twitter of nesting birds. When he went to draw water for his bath from the moss-grown and fern-fringed well, the delicious freshness of the air revived his full strength and spirits. Poising the bucket on the brim, he stood gazing into the enchanting greenwood that crept up nearly to the back porch. Most of the woods he had seen this spring had been cut to shreds with bullets, their young growth gnawed off by starved men and animals, the verdure and bloom that should have been underfoot, trampled with mud and blood.

Here were long, dewy vistas—aisles of tender green, lit by the glow of pink honeysuckle and the white blur of flowering dogwood, the moss beneath gemmed with blue-eyed innocents and flushed wind-flowers. Looking elsewhere, his eye rested upon wide fields—his own fields—and verdant pastures! How sweet and full of promise seemed to him this possession where war had not ravaged. He would put away from it all odious thoughts and associations. He could hardly believe that the episode of the night, with its hateful suggestions of crime and conspiracy, had been more than a dream figment.

After cooking and enjoying a hearty breakfast, Colonel Carlyle, feeling himself once more of sound and normal mind, went out to visit his horse, and make a general tour of the premises near the house. He espied coming up the road to the front door an old negro

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couple, carrying across their shoulders sticks, upon which swung bundles tied in bandanna handkerchiefs. A short colloquy revealed them to be Mars and Dilsey, former slaves of his cousin Julian, aweary of seeking support in the turmoil of a city, and trudging back to their old home in the hope of finding thereabout a vacant cabin and a patch of land in which corn would grow and watermelons might be coaxed. They had accumulated money enough to buy a couple of pigs and a few chickens. The rest they, perforce, left to Providence, seeing that ole Marse had vacated that place in their trustful imagination.

The Colonel, whom they recognized with effusion as a chip of the old block, offering him the homage born with the African in servitude, felt that Uncle Mars and his fifth wife, Dilsey, had, in a way, dropped from the skies to meet his most stringent need. He straightway explained to them his position, arranged to pay the modest wages they required, let them install themselves in a cabin in the yard formerly occupied by his cousin's cook and her family, and felt that he had made a formidable stride in his new life of effort and forgetfulness.

The next step was to stock his establishment with such provisions as would supply its modest needs. For this purpose, leaving the proud negroes in charge, he rode over, although reluctantly, to the nearest source of household merchandise—the cross-roads grocery visited the day before.

## VI

**P**RIVATE LYND SAY was in a most vexatious predicament. The surge of war that had stranded him on this dangerous shore, where a sea-nymph sang irresistibly, had left him without the means of escape possible to his superior officer. He was simply obliged to stay on where he was and meet and surmount the risk of passing hours; to undergo the alternate happiness and wretchedness of contact with a tabooed young person, who, without the least warning by Fate, had come to be the center of all his thoughts and aspirations!

Lyndsay was, it must be said, perfectly content to remain either in the magic garden where Time stood still, while he renewed a former fancy for ministering to plants and flowers, or else in the library, reading aloud to the old gentleman. Mr. Carlyle, giving him little rest in this respect, seemed to have receded mentally into the realm of ancient Greeks and Romans; and while full of interest in their wars and politics, was indifferent to those of his own day and country. Monimia, gliding through the room at intervals, bringing her sewing-over of the ancient garments of an exhausted wardrobe to sit near them, or stepping out of the back door upon the green-sward to comment on his garden work—Monimia, in her

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blooming youth, sufficed to fill up the measure of all young Lyndsay's other earthly needs!

The old servants, who had grown very fond of their soldier guest, made his personal comfort their affectionate study. He had been their Providence in the pinch of need. He had shown modesty, kindness, tact, alacrity in their master's service; they, with the unfailing intuition of their kind, recognized in him real gentility and breeding. Nothing less, indeed, would they have accepted as fit for companionship with "The Fambyly," meaning the Carlyles, root, stem, and branches.

Therefore, fraught with peril though it was, Lyndsay took such satisfaction in the hour as he had not known during years of his previously starved, uncomprehended life. Sometimes, in the night, he would wake up realizing the folly of that satisfaction. Then he would strive to put his manhood into throwing off the spell. But with daylight and the resumption of the strange, dreamy life in this atmosphere of bygones, amid musty books and parchments, venerable portraits and servants, and a dry, old, half-cracked scholar—while Mona and the garden made his poetry—he grew content again and ceased to struggle.

Early one morning of mid-April, the girl came out before breakfast to the garden, where he was utilizing the cool of the day to make a microphylla rose stand up to a sense of its own responsibility, and repose its heavy-headed blossoms upon the trellis intended for their support, instead of that belonging to a neighboring honeysuckle.

She felt brighter. Her father seemed better. In a

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few days she was to be allowed to visit her mother. Finally, the long-delayed letter from Lancelot had come the night before. It was good to know that he was well, and she heartily approved of his manly movement to set to work at Foxcroft, instead of living beyond his means at Carlyle Hall. With all her belief in family tradition, Mona's practical eye had begun to see through some of her father's misconceptions.

The town was quiet. It was a breathing space between great sensations. Lyndsay's face, as he turned it upon her, reflected the hopeful light in hers.

"I'm glad you came out," he said, bending over a stalk of Easter lilies. "For I certainly shouldn't have had courage to keep this little fellow imprisoned one minute longer. Late yesterday evening I noticed a humming-bird wavering and buzzing around this bed, and wondered how he had got to us so early in the season. Just now, I heard a fluttering and smothered chirps, and found the calyx of this lily closed around something living. Shouldn't you like to set him free?"

Mona's eyes gleamed sympathy. Pouncing upon the stalk, she tore apart the petals of the burdened flower. Out and away into the sunshine reeled a tiny ball of green and gold, drunk with honey and sweet smells!

The pretty episode was but the prelude to one of their long, intimate talks—the talks that, insensibly to Mona, were beginning to remold her life and thoughts. To-day, for a wonder, she led the modest youth to discourse of himself and his old belongings. He even found himself pouring forth reminiscences of the rare, fine New England mother, with whom he had lived in



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hard poverty after his father's untimely death; of her ambitions for him, her continued struggle that he should have education and opportunity; of his fervent love for her that had made theirs an almost perfect intercourse between two souls; of her death, and his despair.

Then, after a silence comprehended equally by both, Lyndsay went on to tell of the transfer of his sensitive nature into the keeping of a skinflint uncle, who had quarreled with his father and cast his mother into the gulf of non-recognition while she lived; of the miserable days and years spent in eating the bitter bread of dependence allotted by this hard, begrudging man, who valued a young life only in so much as he could adapt it to the service of money-getting.

The college course, begrudgingly allowed him—every dollar it cost doled out with rebuke—not a penny for opportunities to mingle socially with his own kind—was, nevertheless, Lyndsay's salvation. It opened new horizons, gave him rewards and friendships won for himself by himself, and put new hope into his future.

He had come through it with credit, to face the out-breaking of the war.

And after that, another wretched time of disappointment and submission to his uncle's bitter exaction that he should settle down in the mill office to pay back, through service, the outlay of his education—months during which he “shut his jaw,” and bore what he could not help. And finally, he found himself telling his fair enemy the full tale of his break for freedom and conviction, when he became a private in the ranks of the Union Army.

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Mona had not conceived it possible that she would listen with such varying emotions of sympathy and interest to the story of a life in political sympathy so far apart from hers. She felt actually a desire, curiously detached from her view of the triumph of Union arms, that the new greatness of the united country might, in its wake, bring to this brave fellow compensation and success.

"After all," she said, musingly, having in mind the hints Claxton had given her of Lyndsay's coming promotion, "you will soon go forward. The world's all before you. You're on the conquering side. Before long, you'll be able to accomplish whatever you lay out for yourself. You will forget your past in the splendid future."

"I don't want to forget it," he answered. "It would be a poor stick of a man who would put out of mind the strong formative influences of his career, no matter what wounds they had inflicted. And when I think what it's all led to, latterly—the opening out of my mind, the softening of antagonisms—the right understanding of this break between brothers—above all, to my knowing you and your father—oh, no, Miss Carlyle, don't wish that for me—ever!"

He spoke with fervor, holding trailed over his arm a loosened vine covered with white roses, that might have been carved from Carrara marble. His eyes kindled as he looked down upon the slender figure in the garden-seat, clad in its desperately worn-out frock that smelled of the wash-tub and sweet lavender. The great hazel eyes in which tears seemed to lurk when smiles were not driving

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them away, the curved bow of her red mouth, the warm ivory of her skin, stained on the cheeks with rose-color, never seemed so near to him, so perfectly appealing.

"Yes, you'll have the best of things," she said, with a little sigh of envy. "I feel as if for years I and mine must sit in the shadows and dream of what might have been. For life doesn't go out because one's worsted in honest fight, does it? One aspires just the same, and still longs to be up and doing.—Ah, well! We Southerners must dree our weird. If ever you are back in Virginia, Mr. Lyndsay, when these dreadful days are farther in the past, you'll not forget to come and tell us how life has gone with you?"

"Forget?" he exclaimed, hotly. "Could you think——"

He stopped, putting rein upon himself.

"If it's a year from now that you come back," she went on, guilelessly, "we mayn't be living in this house. My father already talks of letting it and removing to the country. But, in any case," she added, with a slight blush, "there are likely to be changes."

"Changes?" he echoed, his voice flattening in spite of himself.

"There has been no one to tell you of—of something about me, because we haven't any mutual friends. But I thought I should like to have you know it from myself. It had always been planned between my cousin Lance's father and mine——"

Lyndsay turned the wide gaze of his blue eyes upon her, a deep flush coming upon his face, his lips twitching.

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"Yes—you mean that it is intended that you should——"

"Marry my cousin, Lancelot Carlyle, whom my parents love better than any one since we've lost our darling Harry. Lance is to come back soon. We have been expecting him every day. He will certainly thank you kindly for being what you have to us. He is one of the noblest, truest men in the world, I think."

Lyndsay lifted the rose vine into its place, and secured it beyond the peradventure of another escapade.

"I am getting very anxious for him to come," she went on, confidentially matter of fact. "He will know, so much better than any one, what to do for my father. To-day our lawyer called about something very important, and there was no one who could talk to him. He said he hoped, in our interest, that Colonel Carlyle would very soon be here. . . . And then, Lance is so gay, so cheery. The whole house is enlivened when he comes into it."

"You have not heard from him since the Surrender?"

"Yes—it has just come—a letter, all blurred and soiled, as if it had lain in somebody's pocket before falling into water—days behind time! He was going to look after some business of his own in —— County, and would then start back to Richmond. Of course, he had not heard of my father's unhappy condition since the Occupation, or Lance would have come at once."

"Of course," was all that Private Lyndsay found to say. His brain was in a turmoil of mortification and disappointment. Although perfectly well aware that he

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had not a ghost of chance with her, their conversation showing him indubitably that Mona had not considered him save in the actual light in which he stood, the pain was there—vivid, ineradicable. And this Colonel Lancelot Carlyle, this blot upon Lyndsay's sun, why had he never before dreamed of his true relation to the fair Mona? Lyndsay knew all else there was to know about the family hero, thanks to the proud prattle of old Britannicus, who had dressed the image of "Marse Lance" in purple and fine linen, and raised it upon a pinnacle for Lyndsay to admire; but he had not thought of this intolerable thing.

The plague of it was that nobody could deny the engagement to be a suitable and obvious one. Third cousins—a mere nothing in Virginia, as far as it meant an obstacle to marriage. Two great properties adjoining (so Britannicus had said), an old historic name, an ancient, stately lineage, the expected bridegroom possessing wealth in abundance (so said Britannicus) to build up any waste of war!

For the Carlyle factotum, like most of his kind, possessed the virtues and failings of a Caleb Balderstone. His pride, bleeding at the monetary straits to which the family had been recently reduced, had cast about for every means of reasserting itself in the eyes of their benefactors. True, Britannicus recognized that among gentle folk of the same social status, like his ole Marse and Colonel Claxton, a loan of money was a mere temporary accommodation, to be repaid at convenience. The negro had kept a strict account of every penny's worth expended from the Colonel's purse through Private

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Lyndsay, meaning to refer it for settlement to Colonel Lancelot, so soon as he should return. In the interim, Britannicus strove zealously and lied righteously—according to his lights—to hide the reality from his master and “young Miss,” neither of whom had ever been accustomed to know in detail how the household was managed. Since the patient and striving mistress of the house, who had worn herself out in saving them this knowledge, had been laid low, it had been Britannicus and Phœbe who had pinched and planned, during those days when, it is said, the blue-backed bank-notes were taken in the market-basket to be exchanged for supplies that a portemonnaie would hold. Everybody always knew it was useless to approach ole Marse about sordid necessities—and now! Britannicus saw, with a sad heart, the mental collapse of that brilliant, impatient victim of exploded hopes. And as to “little Miss,” “why, bless the child, she’d bust her sweet little heart if she knowed where the money come from.” The one consolation Britannicus took to himself, as a leading deacon in his church, self-convicted of deliberate deceit, was that Colonel Claxton had smilingly threatened to knock his old head off if he ever, in this connection, told the truth!

Yes; Lyndsay was well aware of Lancelot’s superior claims in this dwelling which he himself held by so frail a tenure. He had recognized that when the young Colonel turned up again, his planet must pale its feeble beams and go out in obscurity. He knew also that in the natural order of things, he would soon get his summons to go back to Washington and be mustered out of

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service with the rest of the volunteers. Then, war and its memories would be merged into toil for daily bread. Lyndsay would be forgotten by these Virginians, bound together in a close corporation by heredity and interest. It was baldest folly for him to indulge in emotions like those now choking his utterance and making rebellion against necessity run hot in his veins.

But he could not hide from himself what inspired this lava stream of feeling. It was love for Mona, and jealousy of her cousin! Abruptly he threw down his gardening tools, went into the house, told Britannicus he did not want any breakfast, and stepped out into the street.

The hour was still early, their quarter a little off the general line of news, but Lyndsay had not gone half a square when he met some one who told him what an awful thing had happened at Ford's Theater in Washington the night before.

After that, he did not care to see Mona or any of them for a while.

During the afternoon, a note came to Mr. Carlyle from Colonel Claxton, informing him that he was leaving Richmond, and must, to his regret, withdraw from their household young Lyndsay, who had that day got his promotion to be second lieutenant, and was ordered at once to Washington. Claxton hoped, however, that in view of Colonel Lancelot Carlyle's early return, Lyndsay's presence would soon be replaced to them; and assured his old friend that he would expect to see him again at no very distant date, begging his kindest regards to the ladies of the family.

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Claxton did not say that he had made it his business before leaving, to seek out Mr. Carlyle's lawyer, and have, with that reluctant gentleman, a transaction insuring the financial comfort of the stricken family until their affairs could be straightened out. Mr. Chester could not, indeed, give Claxton much hope of this latter desirable result; but in spite of strong unwillingness to receive aid for his clients from such a source, Mr. Chester did not see his way clear to refusing it.

"When young Carlyle comes back," the good gentleman had said, finally, "I will submit the whole affair for settlement to him. In the interim—" He hemmed, colored, was silent, and Colonel Claxton rejoiced that he had triumphed over Chester. He could not have reconciled it to his sense of decency to go away and leave this duty unaccomplished. But now that a new chasm had suddenly opened between the two sections, in the new bitterness that must arise, he deemed it wisest not to see any of the Carlyles for the present.

It was different with young Lyndsay. His whole being was filled with the horror of the national disaster and with passionate lamenting for the dead. It dimmed the satisfaction of his promotion, and, for the time being, acted as a prompt corrective of his unfortunate sentiment for Mona. He returned to the Carlyles' house late that evening to take leave of them, and already, Mona, standing behind her father's chair in the crepuscular library, seemed to have receded out of his vision of possibilities; and perhaps the largeness of his nature had suddenly contracted in a bitterness that shut her out. He could not tell. He took kind leave of the family, as he



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had previously done of the servants, who were loud in their outcries of regret, and of the flowers which flaunted, unfeelingly, their brightest bloom.

Before Lyndsay could leave the hall, Mona had followed him, arrested his progress, and turned upon him a gaze full of radiant feeling.

"I can't let you go this way, Mr. Lyndsay," she said, very gently. "I don't think my father fully understood that we are parting with you, or he would have said more. Will you let me say for both of us, how glad I am you have your promotion—how glad we shall always be to hear of the better things that will surely come to you? Good-by! My father will miss you, the garden will miss you—and I——"

For a second her eyes held him.

"And you?" he asked, in a hoarse whisper, his cheeks red hot.

She drew back a little. Her voice seemed to be far distant.

"You know what you've been to me. Some day it will seem easier than now, to show my gratitude——"

"There can be no gratitude from you to me," he said.

"But I feel it—tremendously. So will my cousin Lancelot. He will——"

"Allow me to say good-by," said the young man, interrupting her almost rudely.

With exceeding suddenness he was gone. Accustomed although she was to this species of military farewell, when the soldier, directly afterward, is lost to sight behind intervening mists, Mona felt a dull sense of rebel-

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lion against Fate. Yankee or no Yankee, they had been so happy in each other's company. Who, of all the men she knew, could exactly take Lyndsay's place? Feeling a strong desire for sympathy in his departure, she tried to talk to her father of their bereavement, but Alexius was absorbed in a grievance against the cook, who had omitted to add a *soupeon* of onion to a certain sauce.

"If all the 'other side' were like him, papa," she said, persistently, "I think it would not be long before the breach was healed.

"Onion, my dear, is as indispensable to cookery as a sense of humor is to woman. Garlic, now, must be handled on the banks of the Seine—it was the Crusaders, I believe, who first brought garlic from Ascalon. I wish that young fellow, Lyndsay, would be more punctual. I have been waiting some time to have him finish this passage of Ovid. What? You say he is gone? Gone away from town? Impossible! Most inconsiderate to me. And Lance hasn't yet said when he will arrive? Well, thank goodness, when Lance comes back, I shall no longer depend upon aliens."

"When Lance comes back." That, now, was the burden of everybody's cry. Old Alexius, missing Lyndsay acutely, unwilling to admit it, impatient with Mona because she couldn't fill his need, made it his daily song. Sadly his daughter and Britannicus saw that he had become as a fretful child, taxing them to the utmost to meet his whims.

The doctor, to whom they appealed for advice, was at his wits' end. It was his desire to send Mona to her

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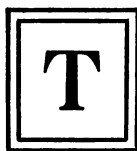
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cousin's in the country, to cheer the slow advance of his other patient. But the condition of Mr. Carlyle called imperatively for the companionship of a member of his own family. A tough old rebel and State rights man dyed in the wool, their doctor was also too tender of heart not to regret for them the loss of the young Yankee guard, who had proved such a mainstay to his afflicted friends. "But when Lance comes," echoed he, "things will certainly look up for the Carlyles."

Thus, every voice swelled the refrain. A second letter from Lancelot announced that he was getting his small establishment at Foxcroft under way, had been able to hire a few laborers, and was starting in with such crops as were immediately practicable, after which he would run down to Richmond and make his report in person. It cheered Mona visibly, and reacted upon the household. The prospect of his actual return heartened everybody. Mona, writing him, threw *couleur de rose* around their circumstances, telling nothing of her father's state. All waited and hoped for Lance, like the Jews for Moses.

In the midst of their uncertainty, when May had brought withering summer heats, came astounding news from Washington. It was announced there in the daily papers, and flashed over the wires to Richmond, that Lieutenant-Colonel Lancelot Carlyle, late of the rebel service, had been arrested at his home in — County, Virginia, upon a charge of traitorous conspiracy against the Government of the United States, and was consigned to the old Capitol Prison in Washington.

## VII



THE old Capitol Prison, in the rear of the National Capitol, near where the stately Library of Congress now rears its golden dome, had, in the early days of Washington, been part of a series of fine private residences, subsequently occupied as boarding-houses and lodgings by Congressmen. Following the burning of the Capitol by the British in the war of 1812, these buildings were used by both houses of Congress for purposes of meeting and debate. After the civil war, they were again converted into separate dwellings and occupied by private citizens.

For the needs of Government during the war between the States, the buildings used as a prison were divided into various compartments, opening upon a central court, some of them serving to detain suspects and civil prisoners charged with treason, conspiracy, or spying.

To this place, Colonel Lancelot Carlyle, carried under close guard to Washington, and unable to communicate with friends, was first assigned as a prisoner of state. From its window, he was presently to look down upon the victorious army of Sherman defiling beneath him upon its triumphant entry into Washington, and here his mind was to receive the preliminary training in

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observation and deduction that would stand him in good stead in terrible solitudes to come.

He had been arrested without warning while in the field at Foxcroft, following the harmless course of a plow driven by his own day-laborer, thus loyally carrying out not only the expressed wish of the successful powers, but that of the manly chieftain of the beaten army.

They had given him no opportunity for protestation or defense. The car of Juggernaut had rolled over him in silence. But he had been previously made aware that dark suspicion had fallen upon him in that neighborhood. The second encounter with the loafers at the cross-roads grocery, had gone far to confirm his first impressions of their disfavor in his direction. He had otherwise seen that the Union element in his sparse, half-deserted, and resettled region was generally against him, and, shrugging his shoulders, had resigned himself philosophically to keep out of its way, and attend to his own affairs.

During this time, he had taken in for the night a wandering soldier of Lee's army, a giant ex-infantryman, strayed thither in the hope of getting a start through a relative of his, a small landowner, who had moved away to the West, leaving him without resource. The newcomer, by name Jerry Trimble, at first fed and warmed like a homeless dog, proved to be possessed of a modest agricultural experience dating from before the war. His hints and help, in the desire to show gratitude and be of use, had led Lance to impose in him some confidence. When the bolt fell from the blue, that was to snatch the master of Foxcroft indefinitely from his

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home, Jerry, divided between his custom of calmly shooting down opponents who took him by surprise, and obedience to his employer, took charge of the house and farm. Mars and Dilsey, between tears and prayers, promised to remain, under Jerry's direction, with the other "hands" whom Lance had engaged, until the mistake of their master's arrest should be rectified by authority.

In his heart Lance could not doubt that the business that had brought Cecil Dare to Foxcroft was the source of his new and most serious trouble. The Dares were not mentioned in the course of the brief interrogatory vouchsafed him by his captors. But he was forced to look on at a search of the premises, in which beds, pillows, and chair-cushions were torn open, as well as every cupboard, chest, and drawer in the old house, leaving Dilsey enough work, she thought, to occupy the rest of her natural life in restoring order. No trace appeared of evidence to be used against him. But Lance, as he rode off between his guards, felt that they meant to hold him fast under grave suspicion. After the first tumult of his resentment had subsided, in his prison chamber at Washington, although still stunned and confused by the signal disaster, he found himself going over and trying to sift out all that he knew about the Dares, now become the important factor in his future. But he saw plainly that in the excited state of the public mind he had little to hope in the way of clemency from the Government unless he could disprove the charges that had been preferred against him. And this he could only do by exposing Cecil Dare.

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From the very first he had set the girl apart from her family, and the instinct of sympathy and protection increased in him as he thought of her. It was the mother who had teased his curiosity. Who was she? What had inspired an inconspicuous matron to take the leading part in so black a project? At Foxcroft he had questioned Mars, to be told Mrs. Dare was "a mighty sperety lady," whose reckless tongue and violent temper had been a tradition in the neighborhood "befo' de wah." That she adored her son, a wild young blade, who had "given his ma and pa lots o' trouble fust and last," and cared very little for the young lady, who had been packed away South to boarding-school when the family went "refugeeing down in Virginny." That the "old gentleman was "putty well wore out with the madam's pranks befo' he died, they say," and Mars had "heard tell" Mrs. Dare had "cut up some mighty shines sence, carryin' despatches for rebel generals."

Going over every item of this rambling talk with his old servitor, Lance, in prison, tried vainly to identify in Cecil's mother, any one of the more celebrated "secret service" women of the South. He wondered if it could have been she who had actually won for the South the first battle of Manassas, recalling the story as it had been told him at a drumhead dinner in camp, by a young aide-de-camp of Beauregard.

Before July 18, 1861, public expectation on both sides of the Potomac was at fever-heat. While General Scott and his lieutenants were incessantly urged by their Government, and goaded by the Northern press, to move on to Richmond, it would be wired to-day from Wash-

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ington: "To-morrow we shall move"; and on the morrow would go forth: "Advance delayed for a week of necessary preparation."

For the South, at that critical juncture, a supreme necessity existed for concentration at the final moment before McDowell could be reenforced by Patterson. In the mean time her brigades must be kept widely distributed; General Johnston near Martinsburg, General Bonham at Fairfax Court House, General Holmes on the Potomac, near Eastport. Even if they assembled, these forces would be greatly outnumbered by General McDowell's single column. All depended upon a certainty of the intention of the foe, and of the date of their advance.

To General Beauregard at Manassas, a messenger, riding in hot haste, brought down the Potomac on the Maryland side (crossing the river near Dumfries, and reaching the gallant leader's tent at exactly the critical instant) a note in these words:

"McDowell has certainly been ordered to advance on the 17th."

The initials signing this fateful missive were well known to Beauregard; the handwriting was recognized, the statement accepted. General Bonham, pulled behind the line of Bull Run, barely escaped his pursuers, who, at noon on the 17th, passed through what had been his camp. Holmes was brought up on the right, Johnston called down from before Patterson, to arrive in the very nick of time during the battle of the 21st. The



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unexpected appearance of his men, throwing McDowell's right into confusion, resulted in the complete panic and rout of the Union Army!

A woman's touch it was, that had set this pendulum of a nation's fate aswing! A woman in Washington who had gained her information through the unsuspectingness of an officer of standing and high record in the army. A woman of birth and refinement, of excellent social place. Suddenly Lance remembered her name—no, that was certainly not "Mrs. Dare"!

He walked to and fro, thought again, then uttered an exclamation. Another tale had flashed back to memory of a woman's even more daring intermeddling with military affairs in the second year of the war. A tale of sharp risks, of a wild ride by midnight into the teeth of a hostile camp, of information gained that led to success astonishing. How could he have forgotten what men who had seen her had told of the appearance of the famous "Molly Ball"—slim, graceful, girlish, dark, vivid—renowned as a spy in the employ of the Confederate Government. Lance decried his previous stupidity. The description of Molly Ball fitted Cecil's mother like a glove.

Molly Ball! She who knew not fear, nor held back from any venture. Cool, calculating, invulnerable to the ordinary weaknesses of women—considering nothing that remained in the path of accomplishing her schemes. She, who had stood unmoved beneath the tree upon which a fellow spy was hanged, and had escaped, by a clever trick, when they were in the act of conveying her to a Northern dungeon! She, Cecil's mother!

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And for this abnormal woman and her worthless son Lancelot Carlyle was incarcerated, evidently implicated in one of the mad plots to burn, raid, despoil, or abduct leaders on the Federal side proposed by free lances to the Government in Richmond, and decried by all fair-minded Southerners!

Once persuaded of what he was believed to be, Lance did not disguise from himself the near peril of an ignominious fate. Public opinion, just then, was like tinder ready for the spark. Appearances were against him, and there would be few to consider his case favorably even if he could ever tell the truth.

The thought of those good people in Richmond hearing what would be charged to his account, cut like a knife. But they would trust him, stand by him to the death; his old comrades would want to band together and begin a new war to snatch him from what threatened. The whole South would believe in him, he knew—upon which reflection he laughed aloud at the flatteries of a clear conscience!

Ah, well! whatever others thought of him, he was secure of his own manhood—and in that knowledge would possess his soul.

One afternoon shortly after arrival in Washington the prisoner was called out by a detective, and conducted to a room in the same building under pretext of visiting "a Confederate lady whom he might find it agreeable to meet." Lance knew, with the instinct of a savage who takes heed of a dropping nut or a breaking twig, that he had better be on his guard. When his

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eye fell upon the oldish, slatternly woman—afterward identified as one of those odious appendages of warfare, a double spy—Union woman in Washington, Confederate in Richmond, to whom with an affectation of off-hand cordiality he was introduced by the detective—he read her true character with loathing, and resolved to let not a word escape him that he might regret.

The woman—Mrs. Anstey, they called her—abounded in kind and sympathetic words. She did not name the young girl who, deadly pale, with a white cloth bound across her brow, stood in the background, revealing a profile that struck Lance in its resemblance to some face on a Roman coin—nor otherwise allude to the girl's identity, except to say that she was the child of an old friend in distress; was suffering from a bad headache, and that Mrs. Anstey, in her plain way, was trying to cheer her up.

Spite of Mrs. Anstey's smooth protestations, her continual smiles, Carlyle felt that the poor girl had been brought there for the same crafty purpose as himself. It was designed that they should meet and talk unguardedly in the hearing of a spy. An impulse of sympathy led him, nevertheless, to address to the young woman a passing word of kindness. With a wan effort at cheerfulness the stranger answered, and, for a while, the three talked on, each affecting indifference, even merriment; each concealing a world of resolute purpose; the detective always listening.

It was not until they were leaving the room that Carlyle heard this man call the young girl Miss Surratt.

He came away from the interview knowing that he

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had escaped a trap. After the disgust of it, his prison dormitory, with its rough comrades, seemed a welcome haven. He prayed God this might be the last time he was to touch such materials of justice.

It was the next day, when all the rebel prisoners in the old Capitol swarmed to their window-bars to see Sherman's imperial pageant of return.

Far as the eye could reach stretched army lines glittering in the sun, no sign of battle smoke or rust on their artillery and accouterments; proud banners flying, band after band sending up peals of triumphing music as they marched; the streets around black with glad, cheering people.

To eyes long used to the faded unanimity of tone among Confederate troops on parade, this vast array of new, bright, blazing sheen and color seemed unbelievable—an oppression to the brain. But, all the same, the Johnny Rebs at the old Capitol windows enjoyed the show hugely, without begrudging professional praise to the details.

They gazed, discussed, fought their battles over again, and, on the whole, felt reasonably comfortable in the expectation that they would some day soon get out of limbo and be able to talk about this "tough time" for the remainder of their days.

A touch upon Lancelot Carlyle's shoulder wheeled him around from the window, to confront a new detective, who curtly told him he was to go to "another place." In the prison chamber around him there was an immediate cessation of animated talk. His companions

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watched the Colonel depart, with awe rather than envy. They surrounded him with handshakes and kind words. The report had gotten abroad among them, that he was to be dealt with according to the full rigor of the law.

A drive in an ambulance—the war-time chariot that served for all military purposes of transfer—brought him to the United States Arsenal, situated upon a peninsula of land running out from the marshy borders of the eastern branch of the Potomac, now the site of the War College of coming generations. It contained a group of brick dwellings, close to the water's edge, amid level military plazas, whereon were banked pyramids of shells and balls, surrounded by bristling cannon, their carriages, and caissons. Behind a high, grim wall towered conspicuously a somber building, with barred and grated windows. Old Washingtonians knew the dismal structure as a District penitentiary. In the second year of the war, its use for this purpose had been discontinued, the military authorities desiring to utilize the building in conjunction with operations of the Government Arsenal, and it was now transformed into a Court of Justice, where, in the third or upper story, was sitting a Military Commission whose proceedings filled the civilized world with awesome interest. In its lugubrious inner cells were confined the prisoners implicated in the assassination of President Lincoln, and others accused of similar intended crime. On every one of these piping days of June the hapless conspirators were brought out in irons through a massive nail-studded door communicating with the cells, and placed in a line punctuated with armed guards, to sit in the court-room

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facing their judges and a motley audience, till the end of the day's session, when they were returned to their dungeons.

It had become a modish thing for society to drop in at the Arsenal and "get a glimpse of the trial." The passes, limited to the capacity of the hall, were as much in demand as opera-tickets for a special performance. The broad, dusty avenue, with its shabby fringes of negro huts and petty shops leading up to the entrance gate, resembled the approach to a county fair. Cattle with lolling tongues, and errant, disgruntled pigs, put themselves in the way of cabs, carriages, foot-passengers, and files of marching soldiers. To the left a military encampment filled the arid plain, where, under shelter tents, the soldiers not on duty were lounging, sleeping, playing cards, or tossing quoits. Every vacant space seemed to bristle with bayonets, and off in the back-ground of the Arsenal, two gunboats prowled upon the river.

The ambulance containing Carlyle and his guard was several times superseded in the line of arrival before the gate by the barouches of smart people, the women dressed as for a race day, chatting in high glee with their military escorts. One after another of these parties passed laughing in under the shadow of the great wall, whereon a line of patrols, ten feet apart, kept perpetually astir.

After passing the officer of the day, Carlyle found himself conducted up several flights of crooked stairs and ushered without warning directly into the oblong, whitewashed hall where the trial was going on.

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His face flushed with quick indignation when, with the curt explanation that they were to await there the Provost Marshal General, to whose custody the prisoner was consigned, the guide bade Carlyle stand where he was, facing the whole assemblage.

A memorable sight, withal!

There were present, in suffocating heat, the Judge Advocate General, with his swart, cold face, boding ill for any prisoner falling under his displeasure; his assistants, the Judges of the Military Commission, unfortunately for themselves, appointed to conduct this trial; the reporters of the Commission; the large, indifferent audience, and the accused—seven men and one woman, shackled—together with their counsel. At once, the attention of the lookers-on, jaded by the monotony of long drawn-out testimony and rebuttal, was diverted to the spectacle of a new prisoner, handsome, manly, bearing himself with the cool courage of a gentleman. It was, for the women especially, a pleasant exchange from the continual survey of those depressing beings in handcuffs, sitting in a row, waiting to hear their doom.

Carlyle stood proudly, impassively, his lips set, his gaze fixed straight before him into space, the sense of indignity continuing to rouse hot anger in his veins. He could see heads nodding together to get a better look at him, lorgnons raised as if to inspect the most recently captured beast of prey. And when at last relieved from the ordeal by the arrival of the Provost Marshal to take official possession of his body, he was again led out of the court-room, his progress was blocked by a vulgar, gaping crowd, who, whispering awestruck as they

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gazed, when the prisoner turned, fell away, huddling together as if from a monster ill secured!

A surge of impotent fury banished reason from the young man's brain. For the first time he resented Cecil Dare and all her works, just as he had hated the fine clothes of the staring women in the audience, and the gilt stars and orange sashes of their attendants. He felt like a bull at bay in the ring, keen to do mischief somewhere.

Between the moment of their leaving the court and a pause in the corridor, during which the General went in search of a certain necessary key, a man and a woman pushed out of the crowded hall, supporting between them a fainting girl, coming to a halt directly behind the prisoner.

At that epoch of sharp emotion, constantly aroused, the incident produced in the throng but a passing ripple of notice. Himself in no mood for sympathy, Carlyle did not even turn to glance at the sufferer so near him. He was grimly swallowing his wrath when a jostle in the crowd of new gazers brought a soft touch upon his arm, and an anguished voice breathed into his ear:

"Always I shall watch and work for you."

His heart bounded, but he dared not turn. At the same moment his jailer reappeared, carrying a formidable key. His band of vagabond followers uttered a long-drawn sigh of satisfaction, keeping at the tail of the little procession as the General strode ahead, the prisoner next, the guard bringing up the rear. Descending steps and threading passages, they came finally to a halt before a grating that blocked the corridor, where the key, inserted in an iron door, and the prisoner



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ushered within, induced the baffled sensation-seekers to fall back and scatter.

The ponderous, barred door crashed to! Life was over for a while, thought Lance. But above the sound of vulgar whispers and titters, and clanging iron and pattering, eager feet, he heard that thrilling promise in the voice of Cecil Dare, "Always I shall watch and work for you." It went with him into the felon's cell, with cemented walls and floor, barren of furnishing save for a blanket tossed into one corner, as dark by day as by night, wherein he was to spend long weeks, forbidden speech with any one whomsoever. The thought that she suffered with him in this his hour of humiliation, warmed his sad heart and nerved him for all endurance. During the days and nights while he alternately lay upon the floor, or walked, or stood stretching his muscles in the hope to save strength and reason, he thought of her continually. She was the companion of his waking and dreaming hours alike, and both sentries and officers appointed to watch that his "silent treatment" was carried out, reported him "well and cheerful."

Twice a day the prisoner was inspected by the Provost Marshal and the surgeon of the prison, to keep note of the endurance of his strength. To these officials it was a source of avowed astonishment that they had from him no more complaint than from a red Indian at the stake, and that he preserved a cheerful, half-satiric attitude in meeting all requisitions. The only favor asked in the early days of his rigorous life was for water in which to bathe. The response came in the shape of a barrel half filled with water, placed in an adjoining cell,

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in which, duly escorted by the sentry, he reveled exceedingly, proceeding afterward to wash his garments in the same water, and to dry them by the difficult process of holding each at arm's length and allowing it to drip.

Lancelot Carlyle thanked God that, a strong mind aiding a conscience void of offense, he had shown no sign of weakening. But the month, wearing to an end, so told upon the physical part of him that at last, with the return of one morning, he could hardly muster force to rise and stand. When his chief jailer and the doctor called they found his pulse a mere thread, his general condition one of extreme exhaustion, his voice hardly audible. The doctor asked if he had anything he wished to say.

"Only that you see my strength is gone," was the answer. "And if it isn't intended for me to die under this treatment I must have a change."

The doctor, assenting frankly, appealed to the General. The General carried the matter to the War Department, and permission was that same day given for the prisoner to take regular exercise in the prison yard below. A tottering old man it was whom they turned blinking into the sunlight! When they bade him walk, his legs refused their office, and he stopped. An official, dressed in brief authority, came up, demanding what they had sent him there to do.

"To get exercise," was the obvious answer.

"Then why don't you move on?"

"Simply because I can't walk."

"Take him in," ordered the man, contemptuously.

Up the long stairs again, hardly able to drag his

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feet; away from the brief glimpse of blue sky, the bare taste of fresh air; back into the black cell. Exhausted, he dropped upon the floor of it. That, clearly, was the only spot where he had a right to be.

Lancelot wondered if he, limp and weary of spirit, were the same man who had ridden so often into battle and faced bullets with such unconcern, taking the soldier's chance, feeling strong and gay and free. He knew that if he gave up now to this miserable sense of physical *malaise*, he was gone. Putting a stout rein upon his spirit, he willed it to rise and soar, and was obeyed. When his friend, the doctor, came again to receive a humorous version of the incident in the yard, that excellent medico was as much surprised by his merry vein as the guards had been, when, one night, they had heard the prisoner reciting poetry aloud, and thought he had gone mad!

This time the order for exercise was accompanied by another, a joyful one. He was to be removed to a light cell. The transfer, effected promptly, resulted in a room facing toward the Capitol, into which summer daylight came through a window in the prison wall opposite. He could even see the great dome glittering afar and a glimpse of the avenue that led up to it.

In the dawn of these improved conditions, including the possession of a chair, the prisoner took courage to make a new demand. To the doctor, arriving with the General one morning, and asking how he did, he answered:

“As well, doctor, as a man can who has nothing to

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think of but himself. I want to have my thoughts changed."

Doctor: "I don't understand you."

Prisoner: "I want books, if I am to keep my health."

Doctor: "He is right, General. I should advise his having books."

General: "My orders are very strict. Certainly he can have nothing recent. But I will apply to the War Department for permission."

Doctor: "I have something of a library; what would you wish to read?"

Prisoner: "If you can give me only one book—say Horace—or a volume of Tennyson's poems."

The doctor looked at the General; the General smiled.

General: "If you can have only one book, I should think you would ask for a Bible."

Prisoner: "That is a book I happen to know well. But if you think so, common decency should prompt my captors to supply one."

The General laughed. So did the doctor. They went off, and at the next visit the doctor brought with him the first volume of Louis Napoleon's *Life of Julius Cæsar*, then recently published, with a promise of more to follow. At a later stage of their acquaintance, the prisoner reminded the General that he had never sent that Bible.

"The truth is," said the General, "I looked everywhere, and couldn't find one."

"I rather suspected, General," was the answer,

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“that you considered the events recorded in the first chapter of Genesis of too recent occurrence to be advisable for me.”

With books in plenty, and daily exercise in the yard, came returning health and an even mental poise.

Carlyle had crying need of this at the present epoch of his imprisonment. Although the world around him was still virtually a blank as far as information went, intuition told him that within the broad walls where the sentries passed forever up and down, was then enacting a drama strange and awful, at which all humanity was looking on aghast.

His wits, sharpened by solitude, and cultivated by close observation of minute detail, kept him actually abreast of all the gruesome happenings of the hour. He knew nothing of any single one of the people under trial; he might have lived on to the natural end of his days without meeting one of them. He had no bias in their direction, no sentimental wish that the course of justice might be averted from them. Once only, while in the yard, he had seen at a window of the prison the wan face of the girl met in the spy's room at the old Capitol, and had taken his hat off to her in common sympathy with the most crushed and sorrow-stricken creature that had ever met his gaze—a fact noted to his discredit.

Speculating continually, as he walked upon his beat, he, at last, managed to pick up unseen and secrete a piece of torn and greasy newspaper, blown away from around the luncheon of some petty officer or guard.

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The paved spaces of the enclosure nearest the wall were, in the parching summer heat, daily used by officials as a lounging-place, where, in the shadow of the great fifteen-foot wall, topped by sentry-boxes, and patrolled by men carrying loaded muskets, they would sit and smoke, jest, eat fruit, and take their ease.

When the sun, gradually pursuing them into their retreat of shade, routed and dispersed the loiterers, there sometimes remained in the yard only the prisoner, walking in all weather, up and down the path worn for himself in the grass, his guard and the blue-coated watchers on the walls.

It was thus, through a momentary evasion of vigilance, that he managed to supply the missing links of the chain of historic events forging so near to him.

The contents of the bit of newspaper, eagerly devoured in secret, left him no room to doubt that the conspirators on trial were hurrying to their doom. He saw also that vengeance in the North was still unsated in the public mind, and would not be until this climax was accomplished.

No charge, to his knowledge, had ever been made against him officially. He had no idea of what fate awaited him. He had only, to strengthen his stout heart, the knowledge of clean hands.

Next, a time came when, within the precincts of the prison, all was anticipation, portent, mystery. It was evident that the guards and even the officers in charge, who had by this time come to look upon the prisoner with no unfriendly eyes, preferred to be near him no

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more than they could help. He saw that they were awe-stricken, and surmised what was to be.

One day there was a continued noise of sawing and hammering wood in the yard where the prisoner was accustomed to take exercise, and that afternoon they did not come for him to walk. Every night, previously, he had been hearing, and had smiled at the melancholy, eternal whistling in the cell beneath his, of some poor devil absent during the day. The sound came up through the ventilating tube, and he had learned to listen for it with an odd sense of companionship. That evening, the whistle was false and flat and intermittent; given up finally as a bad job. That night, also, was heard a new sound—a ship's bell striking the watches, close to the shore.

“Some of the conspirators are to be transported. This boat is to take them off,” came into his mind, the geographical question involving their probable destination furnishing food for speculation until swept away by sleep.

He was awakened at dawn by renewed hammering in the north side of the yard, and, turning in his blanket, came back at once into the field of sad observation and deduction.

From his window he saw troops massing in the avenue, and amid them, riding down in solitude, dark and stern, the Catholic priest who was to shrive the departing. Every one in the prison knew and loved Father Walter, the intrepid soldier of Christ who, because of his belief in the innocence of one hapless soul, was warned not to go with her that day to the scaffold.

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"Tell the Secretary of War," it is written that he replied, "that I fear neither man nor devil. I fear God alone, and will defend with my life the character of the least and lowliest of my parishioners."

The friendly officer who arrived to supervise Carlyle's breakfast was cool, shy, constrained. The soldier holding a musket at the door avoided the prisoner's eye. He ate in silence, and sat afterward for hours without stirring from his chair.

Now the slightest movement anywhere came to him unnaturally distinct. The whole world seemed to have passed under a spell of awful silence. He heard a great gathering of people outside the prison, and, on all sides, the incessant tramp of soldiers. He saw gazers thronging on the roofs of houses facing toward the Arsenal, and looked that way no more.

He heard cell doors opened and their occupants led out into the corridor; heard the sobbing of anguished women, whose footsteps ran a little way before turning back, while the heavier ones kept on.

Then ensued an appalling calm, lasting throughout the midday and far into the afternoon. During that period he knew all, but distinguished nothing.

After a long time the shuffle of soldiers' feet began again, and file after file of troops marched away up the avenue.

At the usual hour toward evening, he was led out for his walk in the north yard. As he stepped from the prison door upon the pavement of the court, he saw, fa-



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cing him, a long scaffold looming back across the end of his daily path worn in the grass, that had come to be known in the prison by his name. At the foot of it, lying upon the path like beads upon a string, were four new-made graves—those of a woman and three men!

The soldiers in attendance and other bystanders looked curiously to see what he would do. Speaking not a word, giving no sign, he began making for himself a new path parallel with his former one.

Before sleeping, he listened for sounds from the cell below. All was silent, and he felt sure the poor whistler had been hanged. But in the middle of the night, a small, faint note came through the ventilating tube. And then the whistle, broken, feeble, and exceedingly dejected, began in one of the old quaint tunes. The listener had not thought he could feel a thrill of pleasure during that most dreadful day, until he found himself laughing aloud at this.

After the ship's bell ceased to strike, the whistling ceased altogether. In a short time the Naval Penitentiary, having fulfilled its grim uses to the Government, was emptied and deserted of prisoners.

## VIII



SEPTEMBER night in Richmond! Dusk had fallen, but with it came no surcease of scorching heat. The air remained stifling till dawn came again, and burning pavements sent up torrid waves into a white, hot firmament.

Mona had a hammock swung for her father between two trees in the garden, and a low sewing-chair carried out upon the greensward for herself. While the old man napped and started fitfully, she sat under the starlight thinking of many things. The air was stagnant with rich, sweet odors from incense-bearing flowers, and she longed for some wood nook fragrant only with the wholesome scent of tiny blossoms growing close to earth; or, better still, a reach of seashore, with green-arched breakers dashing their foam upon it. Anything for a breath of life-giving ozone, anything to make a change from this haunt of heat and perpetual sad thought!

As always, the remembrance of poor Lance, still a prisoner—Lance, knowing nothing of their fresh sorrow in her mother's death, and the recent forced sale of the plantation to provide them a living—Lance, over whose head hung dark, inexplicable clouds—silenced her complaining. The long separation from her cousin under

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these tragic circumstances had led Mona's affections to cluster around him more closely. But she still could not tell where the old accustomed feeling for him ended, and that for an affianced husband began. She only knew that his condition excited her tenderest, most continuing sympathy. All of her poor little efforts to communicate with the prisoner had failed. The newspapers had announced his transfer to a Northern fortress. Her heart was sore at thought of her utter helplessness to comfort him.

Through the shadows of the grape-vine walk, old Britannicus came limping out from the back door. His own present prosperity of circumstances, since Miss Mona had risen to a comprehension of their affairs, and had taken the reins of government into an exceedingly small pair of hands, ought to have keyed his spirit to exalted cheer. For, some time before, Mona had informed the old servant that she could no longer afford to keep the full services of Phœbe and himself, and had forced upon them the finding of paid employment elsewhere, leaving their evenings free for the service of "The Fambly." Phœbe, with tears, had compromised by remaining where she was, furnishing bread and rolls and cake to a mess of Federal officers keeping house near-by, whose dollars were piling up fast in the stocking in her chest, even after deducting the cost of the best materials. Britannicus and his wife were now, indeed, better off than many white folks around them, and he had signalized his first accession of wealth by buying back, at an exorbitant advance, the flowered waistcoat from old Sol Taliaferro!

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Mammy Clary, her task to her dearest mistress ended, had returned to serve old Marse and Miss Mona, with or without pay, so long as the breath was in her body, and they did not cast her off. The other servants had been requested to find themselves places, and were "hired out" with people of means, upon whom they secretly looked down, each negro taking the surname of Carlyle, and fancying him or herself an exiled scion of a royal house.

In the evening, upon returning to the house, Britannicus would resume his jacket of snow-white linen, the well-starched shirt and collar, the white tie, long worn in his master's service; would brush his silver curls to stand in a halo around his bald, black crown, and, after setting the table with a full outfit of damask and china and silver, stand monumentally behind Mr. Carlyle's chair. The old servant chose to ignore the fact that his former owner was now a limp and aged child, held in place by cushions, fretful, capricious, at times letting fly his old arrows of sarcastic speech, but whimpering if the food were denied him for which he improperly appealed—or, again, sitting throughout a meal in moody silence. Britannicus had adjured Miss Mona not to let Marse see they thought him changed a teeny weeny bit, and Mona desolately kept up the farce.

Now in the garden, in the evening light, Mona could see that the butler wore a look of unwonted animation, that a new impulse quickened his gouty feet toward her.

"It's company, little Miss," he said, in an explanatory whisper, not to disturb the whistling doze of ole

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Marse in the hammock. "An' I said I'd jest see if you was at home."

"I am not apt to be far away," she answered, smiling sadly, but a little stirred by comforting curiosity. "Who is it?"

"You'd sartinly never believe it, little Miss, to see him in them stylish city clothes—a real, first-chop gentleman, whatever he has on—it's Mr. Lyndsay, Miss, and if you'll allow him to step out here, he won't disturb you to come into the house."

"Mr. Lyndsay!" she exclaimed, with a sudden invasion of pleasure and relief. He was the last person she expected to see, although the brief lines she had written him to announce her mother's death had been answered by the kind of sympathy the more felt because so much is left unsaid. She should always associate him with her keenest trials, when his ministry to her mother had been like a son's. Time, as it went on, had but showed her how faithful, unselfish, spontaneous his friendship for them had been.

"Of course, beg him to come to us here," she added, and shortly the servant returned, ushering the unwonted figure of Lyndsay in the garb of an ordinary citizen.

Mona took a few quick steps to meet him, putting her hand confidingly in his. As she smiled a welcome, tears overcame her speech. The young man stood silently, glad himself not to have to speak.

Britannicus brought out another chair, creating a fortunate diversion. The two young people sat down near the hammock, from which no stir of awakening came.

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Over their heads soared the tall magnolias, their stately tops seeming tangled in the stars. The moon was yet to rise, and a swarm of fireflies flitted among flowers and shrubs that sent up an almost sickening fragrance, wafted in gusts to the two sitting with their feet in the hot, dry grass. But to Mona, a fresh breeze seemed to come into the garden and caress her face.

Although she saw Lyndsay indistinctly, she was struck with his changed air. He looked freer, more sure of himself, and spoke confidently.

"You have just come from Washington?" she said, when she could command her voice.

"Two weeks ago I was there, still working for my appointment in the regular army. Suddenly something rather important occurred that called me to Massachusetts. Since then I've been in New Jersey doing a bit of 'underground' business, rather out of my line, certainly, but I considered the end justified the means, which were harmless enough. It was a little errand for you, Miss Carlyle."

"For me—an errand—what can you mean?"

"This will explain it," he said, putting a letter into her hand. "The contents are purely personal, or I could not have been its bearer."

"From Lance?" She uttered a little broken cry of joy. It stirred Alexius, who called out in a childish tone:

"How often must I say, Mona, that I desire my port wine sangaree and a slice of thin bread and butter to be served before the hour for retiring? It must be past the time."

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"Yes, papa, in one moment," she said, clasping the precious letter between throbbing hands, fearful the glad beating of her heart would make itself audible.

"And mind you see that the bread is cut not thicker than a sheet of paper. I've often wondered if Werther's Charlotte attained excellence in that line through practise. Have I ever told you, child, how Thackeray happened to write those lines in dear John R. Thompson's copy of Goethe's Werther?"

"Charlotte, having seen his body  
Borne before her on a shutter—"

"I can't seem to recall the earlier stanzas."

"Tell me about it, papa," she said, lingering to humor him, although she had often heard the story.

"Mr. Thackeray happened to drop in at the State Library to see Thompson, and finding him out at the moment, picked up his copy of the Sorrows of Werther lying open upon his desk, and wrote this on the fly-leaf. Ah! I have it now—"

"Werther had a love for Charlotte  
Such as words could never utter.  
Would you know how first he met her?  
She was cutting bread and butter.

"Charlotte was a married lady  
And a moral man was Werther,  
And for all the wealth of Indies  
Would do nothing that might hurt her.

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“‘So he sighed and pined and ogled,  
And his passion boiled and bubbled;  
Till he blew his silly brains out,  
And no more was by them troubled.

“‘Charlotte, having seen his body  
Borne before her on a shutter,  
Like a well-conducted person  
Went on cutting bread and butter.’

“He, he,” chuckled Alexius. “A delightful *résumé* of that milk-and-water romance. But every great mind must have its drop into commonplace, and I yield to no one in my reverence for Goethe’s genius. I had the honor to know him as an old, old man, when I spent some months, as a youth, in Weimar. The steel-engraving of him that hangs under the Boydell print of Shakespeare in the library was given to me by Goethe’s own hand. He was feeble and shaky—a pitiful sight that—a giant in decay. I remember saying, when I came away, that I’d rather be struck by lightning than rust out!”

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“Papa,” said Monimia, “here is some one who has come to see us. Aren’t you glad to have Mr. Lyndsay back?”

“Lyndsay? Lyndsay? The young Yan—I beg your pardon, Mr. Lyndsay, you will not expect me to get up. . . . I’ve been a little under the weather. . . . If quite convenient, we will take up the passage in Ovid, where . . . Mona, child, tell them to bring lamps. It is getting too dark to read.”



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Mona disappeared into the house. Very kindly and gently Lyndsay settled the old man back into his hammock, and, as if they had parted but the day before, talked to him of the books they both loved. When Britannicus came out with his master's nightcap of sangaree, and aided the tottering limbs to find their way bedward, Lyndsay remained where he was, profoundly sad.

A brief talk with Britannicus on arrival, had put him in possession of the Carlyles' present position. The butler had at first tried to carry things off as if the episode of the young soldier's helping to feed "The Fambly," at starving point were several centuries ago. He was also eager to inform Marse Lyndsay that Miss Mona had reimbursed Colonel Claxton for the moneys passing through Lyndsay's hand, as well as to convey to the young man the fact that they were now again living upon their own private income, hoping devoutly to suppress the sale of the Manor belonging to Carlyles since the days of good Queen Anne.

Queen Anne, Lyndsay had observed, was, in the butler's eyes, really of less importance than the Carlyle ladies in busks who sat in the gilt frames in the drawing-room. But he sometimes mentioned her because she sounded well.

When, therefore, after the negro had sketchily contrived to let Lyndsay know their debt to Claxton had been acquitted, and that Miss Mona, showing a surprising zeal for business, had been "all over her father's affairs with the lawyers," so that "The Fambly" were once more upon the drawing-income-and-doing-nothing-to-earn-it basis, which Britannicus considered indispen-

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sable to old gentility, he was a little piqued to find that he had apparently missed his point.

"Tell me, old man," Lyndsay had interrupted him, almost brutally, "is it true Mr. Carlyle had to sell the Manor for an absurdly small sum to a Northern man who threatens to cut the timber?"

"Ahem! It would seem, Mr. Lyndsay, sir, that my master *has* felt called upon to part with a certain portion of his property," the negro answered, with a gulp. "An' we are told the—ah—pusson—that bought it is from the Nawth."

"You didn't chance to hear his name?" pursued Lyndsay, in a preoccupied tone.

"Yaas, sir—they come here, him an' the lawyer, for my master to sign the papers. I showed him into the library. It was Mr. Sharpless, sir—Mr. Amasa Sharpless, of some place in Massachusetts—or p'r'aps Connecticut. I disremember which."

"By George!" Lyndsay had exclaimed, slapping his thigh in a manner wholly expressive and inconsistent with the heat.

The surprise of this information had gone with him into the garden—had held him during his interview with Mona, and continued after Britannicus had taken her father inside. For Mr. Amasa Sharpless was none other than his own mother's brother, recently deceased, the whole of whose hoarded property had passed into Lyndsay's possession!

While Mona forsook him to read her letter, Lyndsay fully abandoned himself to the surprise of the situation. He could not tell whether he was glad or sorry for what

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had come to pass, because of the new relation it entailed with the Carlyle family, and dreaded the moment when Mona should find it out.

"Which she shall not do if I can prevent it," passed through his mind. "For of all queer happenings, to me this is the strangest. It is not Mr. Carlyle, not my poor uncle, but I, who am actually the owner of Carlyle Manor!"

And Mona, in her own chamber, under the light of a single bedroom candle, was eagerly reading the while, closely written lines penciled upon a sheet of thin, blue, foreign paper that had been folded many times.

Not the ideal prison missive, inscribed in heart's blood upon a scrap of torn handkerchief, but, to the full, as interesting and absorbing to its recipient:

"FORT DELAWARE, *September* —.

"At last the chance comes to me, so long and eagerly waited, to communicate with my dear friends and home people. Such a proud fellow as I feel myself to be, owning a whole sheet of paper and the stub of a pencil—both to be hurried into a place of concealment I wot of, should authority turn my way! And the idea that this will reach Mona's hands—that her kind eyes will rest on it—how exhilarating! Now, whatever you do, dear cousin, don't let those eyes fill with tears while you are reading me, for I am really so much better off than when first they made me a guest of Government in Washington, with very restricted quarters, I can't find it in my heart to complain at all. I am well, I have room to walk about in, I don't suffer—except from small ani-

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mated nature, at intervals. I saw my face in a plate of molasses yesterday, and my cheeks are round and full. I get food enough, and exercise on the parapet looking out to the river; and beyond my poor deserts, I have found friends. Friends in the Seats of the Mighty, who give me interviews, and are pleased to show interest in my case—friends among humble people who carry bayonets, and would like, an' they dared, to wink at my taking small liberties with law. And best of all, friends of my own class and stripe—seen only from afar, of course, but by some mysterious freemasonry we understand each other's signals and converse satisfactorily in a way that puts a new heart under my ribs and keeps hope alight. As to the cause of my being shut up at all, it seems to me to have been so long ago, it has passed into aboriginal history. I can't explain it to you—certainly not here. I don't ask my good friends at Carlyle Manor (for there you all are, of course, in this piping weather, keeping cool and comfortable—don't I wish I were of the group for one short hour?)—I don't ask you to believe that I am utterly and wholly guiltless of what they allege against me, because I know you do. It is monstrous that any enemy of mine should credit me with such stuff as conspiracy, much less my dear, dear kinspeople. If ever they go through the farce of trying me, truth must come out. But now—I am helpless, I can only wait. Be brave for me, dear cousin, and keep cheerful. Some day we will all laugh together again—and you will listen while I talk—how I shall talk after those months of silence! Certain black pages in my prison life in Washington will be sealed together and

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put out of mind. The rest shall be to us mere incidents of a soldier's career, to be referred to cheerfully, and lived over again, with thankfulness that they were no worse. Remember, I'm no martyr; I've never pined or considered myself an object of pity—but here, my paper's used up, my stub refuses to make another mark. Let who will read this, I am not ashamed of it, nor, dear little cousin, to say that I am always your and your father's and mother's loving  
LANCE."

How like him in every line! She could hear him say the phrases. She laughed and cried by turns over the pages, but it did not occur to her to kiss them. There had been nothing between Lance and herself to warrant that sort of outburst. He was simply the best, the bravest, handsomest of cousins, whom she loved dearly, and who would always have her loyal faith.

Much comforted, she ran down again into the garden to find Lyndsay star-gazing in a philosophic way.

"Thank you a thousand times for my letter," she said. "The only thing that made me want to cry in it was that he imagines us spending the summer all together at the Manor, and does not know that my darling mother will never be there again—that, thank God, she won't have the sorrow of knowing we can't go back there. For I suppose you had heard, Mr. Lyndsay, that our dear old home is sold?"

"I have been told so," said Lyndsay, with reserve.

"It is better that it should be to a man one has never heard of. The worst I know of this Mr. Sharpless is that he proposes to sell the timber. But let us not talk

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of any more sad or terrible things. I want to keep up the happy influence of dear Lance's letter for a while. And above all, I want to know—if I may—all about how you got it for me?"

"Honey," said a sweet, anxious voice near them, "you ain't had any more bad news?"

It was the old nurse, never too far from her darling, hovering behind a rose trellis.

"No, Mammy Clary, good news—a letter from Lance, and he is well and cheerful. Tell Phœbe and Britannicus, please, and then sit down on the house step yonder, and wait till I've finished my talk with Mr. Lyndsay. Now, Mr. Lyndsay, I'm all ears, and would be eyes, if the light allowed."

"Oh! but I can't reveal all my mysteries," said the young man, divided between pleasure at seeing her roused into a moment's brightening, and a jealous pang at what had brought it about. "If I did, there would be an end of everything. But I have promised myself the pleasure also of taking a letter back to Colonel Carlyle from you. You have seen that this one had been folded many times. I may tell you it came out in a roll of baker's bread from the prisoner's casemate."

"Did you go near the fort?" she asked, with sparkling eyes.

"Rather near. At least to a village not far away in New Jersey."

"It couldn't have been chance that brought this about. Now, was it, Mr. Lyndsay?"

"No, not chance, exactly—I——"

"You hesitate—you aren't a bit good at beating

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about the bush. You know you managed it all your own good self."

"It's a very incriminating admission you are trying to force from me, Miss Carlyle."

"You did do it, then? And for us, who had already imposed so much on you?"

"For you," he said, simply.

Mona did not heed the emphasis upon the pronoun. She was lost in this amazing kindness and forethought from a stranger, a wayfarer who had tarried with them for so brief a time and had already wrought them such noble and delicate service.

"And when must I have my letter ready in return?"

"The sooner it is finished, the sooner Colonel Carlyle will be made happy by it. By the way, I may tell you this—that I have ascertained he has won all his jailers and guards, from the highest to the lowest, to liking and respecting him. They call him the champion prisoner of the fort and declare his pluck and good temper invincible."

"Oh, I am glad!" she exclaimed. "But then you know it was never any other way. It is simply impossible not to be won by Lance."

"So I should judge by your experience," he said, dryly.

"Oh! I didn't mean that way," she exclaimed, girlishly. "The truth is, Mr. Lyndsay, I often forget that Lance and I are ever to be anything but dear chums and cousins. We were only engaged for half an hour before he rode away to the Surrender. Of course, I shall

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be different when he comes back again," she concluded, with astonishing *naïveté*.

Lyndsay sat upright on the edge of his chair. This Mona, warmed to confidence and excited by a glimpse of brighter things, was quite another than his sad, self-contained heroine of the Occupation. The bare hint of what she might be in happier frolic girlhood, joined to her artless admission about her cousin, went to his head like wine. But he restrained himself, laying an iron hand upon the rein.

"I want to tell you also about our mutual friend, Colonel Claxton," he went on. "He is really the best friend I ever had. Not content with working for my appointment among the regulars, he has advised me in other plans I have in mind, and tells me that before I come finally to a decision, I must make him a friendly visit at Newport."

"Do go. You will love it. How well I remember that villa and the deep veranda and gorgeous flower-beds! Most beautiful of all, the sea that I have hardly ever known well—such wide, blue vistas sparkling and glinting, and the sense of endless distance beyond. For all that, I could never love it, or any place, as well as the poor old Manor," she added, with a sigh. "But you have not told me if you have finally arranged for the army."

"You will let me impose on you with my own affairs?"

"I am full of interest in them. I have thought of you over and over again, and wondered if I should hear—I never supposed it could be anything but good."



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These kind words of the girl he loved filled Lyndsay with satisfaction and tenderness. In all the world, since his mother died, there had been no other woman so to speak to him, and he felt, in grateful return, that if he might not woo Monimia Carlyle, he could at least take to himself the solace of her sympathy.

"It is a strange thing that has come to me," he said, after a pause to collect his words. "While I waited in Washington, my position in life was among the vast majority who must toil up to a comfortable livelihood and an established place. I was alone, poor, comparatively unfriended, free to choose my career, and feeling that it would be years before any one would so much as turn at the mention of my name. A soldier of fortune—the idea was not unattractive, on the whole. . . . Then, in the opening of a yellow envelope that came to me through the War Department, and left me dumb with amazement, my whole situation changed. I had never counted upon anything more than I'd had from my uncle at Airedale. He was one of those spare, wiry, inflexible men who suggest living on forever, and had told me at parting that I was to have no mention in his will. Well, the telegram stated that he had died suddenly without making any will, and that I was his sole heir."

"What a fairy tale!" exclaimed Mona.

"I think, if I hadn't discovered among his papers an unsent letter, showing that he felt some natural kindness toward me, and remorse for his treatment of my mother, I should have chucked the whole thing overboard. Especially, as to take this large property meant

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tying myself up to the mill business that I had learned to hate while I was his subordinate, chafing under his daily tyranny."

"But, surely, common sense showed you that view of it would have been childish to keep up," she said, practically.

"Of course. But men are children, when keen resentments and old grievances are uppermost. I deliberated for a night in my small, cheap room in the Washington hotel, but sent a telegram next morning, and followed it by the train. When I reached Airedale, I found the lawyers and my uncle's chief employees actually eager for me. It was a great sensation to feel myself wanted to that extent. They took me in charge without relenting, shut me up for hours in the stuffy inside office, where I once used to go expecting rebuke and insult, and administered to me mill business in large, continuous, heroic doses. I declare to you, Miss Carlyle, during that ordeal, I would have given my head to be out and away with my company in a forced march through an unknown country. However, I survived it—even earned some commendation from my tormentors, and spent a week in going over the ground in all respects. I am the owner of a larger property and wider interests than any one believed my uncle to have possessed. In his late years, he had a secret fad for acquiring real estate, here, there, everywhere, which may turn out of great value in the growth of a new prosperity, some of which transactions have not yet been traced. The long and short of it is, I must give up the army and work for all I am worth in following up my uncle's various invest-

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ments and putting the new life, they tell me will be needed, into his factories."

"I congratulate you with all my heart!" she exclaimed. "The little I know of such things points me to nothing, but I feel, I imagine, that you will soon be full of interest and happiness in your work. Didn't I say, Mr. Lyndsay, that for you the future held nothing but success? Remember my prediction in this very garden, and confess I'm a good prophet!"

Her simple cordiality, no less than her clear way of accepting the inevitable in his affairs, proved a needed tonic.

"Then you indorse me throughout?" he said, joyously. "That is good. If you have time and patience to listen, I should like to tell you about a house—one of my uncle's purchases—that I visited the other day. It is not supposed that he would have ever lived there. He preferred his clapboarded cottage with the jig-saw decorations, standing a little way back from the village street, with its weedy yard and an iron dog on one side of the plank walk to the front door; on the other, an iron deer. That is what I used to call my home, and there he died. He bought this other place presumably to sell at a profit to some rich summer resident. It is well out of town, away from the noise of the factories, in sound of the wonderful meeting and plash of the mountain streams that feed our busy river. Oh! those bonny beck—how I loved them as a boy, how I always shall love them! The whole horizon around Airedale is locked in by misty blue summits and nearer rugged hills, and there are fragrant valleys like green troughs,

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and, here and there, the bluest, most tranquil little lakes. The house stands on the crown of a sloping hill, with glorious views on every side, and fresh winds hurtling around it!"

"Don't! You make me envious!" cried she.

"Perhaps I am biased, but our North country appeals to the Viking side of me, and I breathe freer in its air."

"Is it a pretty house?"

"Square and solid, built by a strict utilitarian, of stone from native quarries—not an effort at outside decoration. An opportunity, my shrewd uncle thought, for some city man with a long purse and an ambitious wife. For an hour I stood outside of it, listening to the voice of waters, and gazing at the hills, and dreaming that it would one day be my real home, till the hack-driver lost patience and reminded me 'twas nigh on to noon time,' and he'd 'got to get his dinner and meet the 1.30 train.' Then I braced up and took a hasty scamper through the inside. It had been bought, furnished, from a man who failed in business. Such a lot of mortuary chambers as I found, each gloomier than the other! A bonfire in the hall, clearing out all that stuff they call furniture, would be a tremendous gain—then, one could cram it up with books."

"Go on. Tell me more. It is all so different from here. It makes me forget for a little, little while——"

Her high spirits fell suddenly. She could not long maintain them.

He had avoided touching upon the topic of her most recent grief, and she had bravely put it away, each feel-

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ing that speech on that subject was impossible. But the recollection of his devotion on this spot to her beloved sufferer was never far from Mona's mind. He was forever tenderly interwoven with the tragic episode. The bond he had laid upon her gratitude would go with her to her grave.

He talked on, answering her questions, soothing her nervousness, until the tremor went out of her voice, and she spoke naturally again.

"All this time," she exclaimed, "you haven't said why you left Airedale almost directly after you got there, and returned to New Jersey."

"Have I not? I thought I said 'for you.' As a matter of homely fact, that was the first moment it was actually possible for me to do what I had planned."

The blood rushed into Mona's cheeks. How dull of her not to have realized that the first use of his money possibilities had been to secure a passing happiness for her! And how sweet it was to be thus cared for from afar! Her silence showed him that she understood.

A faint but welcome breeze began to sigh in the magnolia tops. Some youth, passing in the street outside the wall, trolled in a sweet, untutored tenor voice a song of love. The stars shone less brilliantly because, by now, the moon had risen, filling that cup of sweets, the garden, with pale radiance. In one of the two young hearts thus entrapped by nature's cunning, a strong, true passion was already enthroned securely. Nothing could dislodge it, neither adverse fate nor his own efforts. The flood of time alone could lessen its control of him, although he had no hope of winning her.

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In the other, the mystery of love was just awakening, with soft, ineffectual flutters and little, happy throbs. She did not recognize the invader, and knew only that a peace and joy long flown from her innocent maidenhood had returned, making her wish that this hour could endure without limit.

Old Clarissa, the dark chaperon, crouched on the door-step of the house, napping at intervals, but occasionally sitting up alert and perplexed to know why the young man stayed so long. She had every appreciation of Marse Lyndsay's worth, but it did not seem to her the child was old enough to be receiving young gentlemen's visits "all by her lone self, an' no ma to look after her, the lamb!"

The pair under the magnolias put an end to her speculations finally. They arose together and walked toward the house, Britannicus, like a spider, simultaneously emerging from some lair at the back, and making swiftly to the front door. Because Miss Mona was worse than orphaned, there was no reason to neglect the conventionalities of the occasion, he justly thought. Mona bade her guest farewell, supported on either side by the ancient negroes, one courtesying, the other bowing, in old-school fashion.

Lyndsay, promising to return on the morrow for the letter she was to entrust to him, and also to inquire after Mr. Carlyle's health, took his leave, walking with characteristic quickness and determination down the moonlit street.

Mona, who wanted to reread her treasure, sent Mamma away so hastily that the old nurse found her coad-

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jutor, the butler, still engaged in putting out the lights below and shutting up the house, under the superintendence of Phœbe, stepped in to keep her liege company.

"Brit," said the nurse, who, being that dignitary's sister, sometimes ventured to abbreviate his fatiguing prenomens, "'pears to me Marse Lyndsay looks at my lil' girl the way cats look at cream. An' lettin' alone Marse Lance, it won' do. Nawth and South ain't ready to pull together, yet."

"Sister Clarissy," replied her brother, sententiously, "right you air."

"There's folks in this neighborhood that's a'ready noticed our lettin' her keep company with 'Yankee soldiers.' That sassy hussy Venus, at Dr. Paulin's, had the impidence to tell me 'twas enough to make Miss Mona's grancestors git out o' their graves and dance, to see her goin' around with a common guard."

"Worn't no use to answer a low-down creetur' like that there Venus," remarked the sage. "But ef you *had* felt called upon, Sister Clarissy, you mout ha' foun' it convenient to remind her that ef we ain't capable how to tell real quality on sight, we don' go to the Paulins, whose grandfather was a nigger trader, to find out. An' I don' min' lettin' you gals know," he added, big with suppressed knowledge, "when I let him out the do' just now, Marse Lyndsay giv' me the speshul information that sence his uncle died he's got more money than he can shake a stick at."

"Huccom he to mention that, Mr. Cyarter?" interpolated Phœbe, with an eager eye.

"Jus' you wait, ole 'ooman," answered her lord,

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chinking something in his pocket with rich enjoyment. "What would you say to a twenty for me an' a ten for each o' you? Brand-new, shiny gold fellows—a keepsake to remind us of our fightin' de fire that day?"

"I'll allers testify if Marse Lyndsay ain't quite good enough for our young miss, he's jus' *almost*," exclaimed Phœbe, joyfully.

"Hush your nonsense, Mrs. Cyarter; that young man's the best there is," observed Britannicus, with marital finality. "An', sister Clarissa, I'd advise you not to bother your head specerlatin' 'bout our chile's marryin' any one on God's earth 'cep'n our own Marse Lance. Ole Marse won' die happy ef he don' see her settin' some day at the head o' de Carlyle Hall mahogany, ladlin' out soup from Queen Anne's tureen!"

"Reckon you've got de jud'men', Mr. Cyarter," interposed his spouse, recklessly. "But de price o' butter and aigs this spring has brought me to a realizin' sense that, 'thout money for the marketin', there ain' no such thing as reel happiness. And it'll be many a long day 'fore Marse Lance can git that tureen from out his silver ches', I'm thinkin'."

"The good Lawd will provide," remarked Mammy, to fill up an uncomfortable pause. "All I pray is that he'll spare me to nuss one o' Miss Mona's babies."



## IX

**L**ANCELOT CARLYLE was by now quite another being from the tense, overstrung stoic who had been removed from the scene of his prison experience in Washington to a new variety of durance. The Danish captain who, with two guards, had conveyed him to the old moated fortress in the Delaware River some miles below Wilmington, found him a jolly traveling companion, although Carlyle had not been spared the recital of a terrible chapter of the last farewell between her child and the woman whose jailer the captain had lately been, over whose head he had drawn the black cap upon the scaffold, and in whose innocence he declared his stout belief.

For such horrors must be put aside as necessary incidents of war, and the change anywhere, and the little journey by train, had refreshed Lance for what might be yet to come. His sense of fun welled up into bubbling laughter, when, in the station at Philadelphia, a conveyance expected to take them to the boat wharf having failed to appear, the captain requested his prisoner to have an eye on the two guards while he went in search of the missing vehicle!

The Government had not, however, greatly relaxed its iron grasp upon the prisoner. It was still solitary

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confinement they decreed to him at Fort Delaware, under that old, continual, maddening survey of a guard forbidden to speak. At stated times, he was allowed exercise between two sentinels upon the ramparts where his horizon seemed to widen visibly. His commandant, the officers of the post, the guards and attendants all showed him mute kindness in many trifling ways. Above all, there were now near him friends in like plight with himself—old, tried friends, officers of rank in the Confederate army, who had fought to the last ditch and never stained hands and souls with foul assassination—who were held as witnesses in a trial supposedly to come. So long as he had a glimpse of these men upon their walks, could exchange glances of fellowship with them, and lift his hat without speaking, the situation was endurable. If he were to suffer still further, in God's name let it be with such as they!

Often, however, the sense of his utter isolation weighed heavily. The gentle and confiding image of Mona, the memory of his kinspeople and home, had seemed to vanish behind a veil of silence and mystery. Strangely enough, it was then the vivid personality, the impelling charm of Cecil Dare, who had wrecked him, that brightened his solitude. He would awake in his bunk thinking he saw her stand before a high, dim mirror, twisting the braids of her "amber-dropping" hair. He would feel again the irresistible touch of her hand upon his arm, and thrill with the thought that she had called herself his wife!

"Always I shall watch and work for you!" Ah! Cecil would, she must, come back into his life, no matter

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what clouds now lowered between them. Suddenly, he would recall with a start that his word, his faith, the best in him, was pledged to Mona, dear innocent, who had once fluttered for a moment like a frightened dove upon his heart, while her clear eyes told him she had never yet felt love.

But ever and ever again, echoed the whisper, surcharged with yearning tenderness, that had floated to him over the vulgar, jostling crowd hounding his footsteps to his prison cell. Do what he might, that always dwelt with him, soothed him, gave him hope. No woman's voice had ever seemed the same! Sometimes, pacing the parapet between two mute sentries, he heard it in the air, and his feet grew light as his bounding heart. Then the dull moat girdling the fortress and the river beyond might be dark of hue and leaden beneath low-hanging clouds, but to his eyes they glistened and sparkled. The free boats rolling afar under inflated sails seemed to be unsteady of gait through suppressed hilarity. He recalled the apostrophe of Kingsley's rock-bound Andromeda to the ocean, "which to her had a smile in its gleam, a laugh in the flash of its ripple!"

But, too often of late, during the night-watches that made the world seem so far away, the fear that Cecil was ill or dead had become intolerable, and he longed for daylight to give him cheer.

The chance that had come to him through Lyndsay, to send out a letter to Mona, and receive one from her in return, had opened the way to a more wholesome phase of feeling. The early objects of his love and faith had reassume their rightful place. Cecil, and all that con-

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cerned her, receded; Mona's dear, kind words were read over and over until he knew them by heart. It was as if his real betrothal had begun from the date when he realized how much Mona needed him at home.

Early in October, the secret telegraph of every prison flashed to him interesting news. Through the Water Bucket in the corridor, to which prisoners were allowed to go singly to quench their thirst—the recipient of as many strong men's secrets as the Lion's Mouth of medieval Venice!—he became aware that General Beaton, long in duress near him, was about to be set at liberty. He ascertained also, that the good wife of this old friend and brother-at-arms had arrived at the fortress to carry her prize away in triumph.

The next day, Colonel Carlyle was officially transferred to the quarters left vacant by General Beaton; a larger, better room than his old one, with a table beneath a window looking to the west. Remembering Beaton's ever fluent muse, Lance was amused to see the whitewashed walls profusely scrawled with verse of a melancholy moral strain, chiefly lamentations over the decadence of man, their tone hardly according with the spirited war record of the author. But on the space hidden by a small, rude washstand, he also found, to his delight, his own initials, with the number of his regiment! Beneath, in a cipher once used at the headquarters where he had served on staff duty with Beaton, he read something that caused him to lift his head and expand his chest with joy. It was a message telling him that friends were busy in his behalf, and he might soon look for good news, from "her who had promised to

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watch and work"! This token from the outer world—the first save Mona's single guarded note—filled him with boyish glee. He wanted to shout, to sing, to cry aloud. That the old fortress which had harbored thousands of rebel prisoners would, henceforward, boast of but a mere handful of wards of the nation, among whom he would be conspicuous, was a fact forgotten. The brilliant, high-spirited young fellow, so long suffering for imaginary offenses against a government he was ready to serve loyally, took new courage and thanked God.

At breakfast time next day the convict soldier who cooked and served his meals—an affectionate creature, with dog-like eyes, his debtor for many a kind act—set before him some rolls of bread, with a gesture toward one of them, which Lance laid aside and secreted. He broke it open, later, to draw out with eager fingers a letter from Cecil Dare!

Cecil had found an ally in Mrs. Beaton. Bless the dear woman for contriving such joy for him! The first paragraphs told Lance it was thanks to this kindest of friends, that Cecil had been enabled to communicate with him. To his surprise and relief, he learned further that the two ladies had lived together in one room of a boarding-house in Washington all the hot summer through, both working indefatigably for the release of their prisoners. They had met by chance, to become warm friends, never parting till Mrs. Beaton had succeeded in her effort, and Cecil had been spirited away to Newport to recruit her health under charge of another friend, also enlisted in Lancelot's behalf. But Cecil had not left the seat of government without find-

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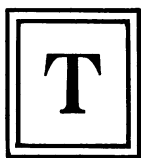
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ing out two things: viz., that the authorities had from the first been trying to trace out through Carlyle evidence of a plot among the officers of Lee's army against the lives and liberties of Federal leaders, and also that they were almost wearied out with the host of witnesses who had offered themselves in Carlyle's defense, and with the letters written in his behalf, from all quarters of the South.

Cecil also assured Lance that efforts would not slacken, nor testimonials lessen in number, until the desired result was attained. He was told of powerful influence newly brought to bear upon his case, and advised to send out a letter or two in certain quarters where they would take effect. And, in conclusion, came these words:

"You may readily divine that I should not have had the courage to address myself to you directly, had not the enormous relief come to me, of learning from official sources that your arrest was *not* the direct result of a certain domiciliary visit from one Mr. Timothy Dollar, and of his misconception of the situation there. The house had been previously under suspicion—papers were known to exist there that could not be produced—there was enough to link the owner, then resident, with some one of various suspected plots. However this may be, the suffering you have so nobly and innocently borne, must always be shared by me. I think, by this time, you have fully understood my identity and my antecedents. Some day—Heaven grant it be not far away—I may try to tell you, face to face, that I am always your grateful and faithful friend. C. D."

## X



TWO women, signally refined and distinguished in exterior, wearing cool grays and whites that fitted like the plumage of a gull—whose grace even the horrible circumference of steel and whalebone exacted by fashion could not disguise—walked up and down in feverish excitement before the vine-covered porch of a cottage by the waterside, watching their escort, a tall, soldierly, red-headed young man in tweeds, try the effect of his eloquence upon its proprietor, a certain remonstrant Captain Fogg.

They had come thus far in pursuance of a project nursed in secret between the women, and assented to with some diffidence by the man, whose ideas of their sex in its relations to the public did not then project beyond the apostolic home-keeping limit; and whose own particular bright star of womanhood would always shine with the more effulgence when he contemplated her as radiating within a fixed orbit. The globe-trotting, athletic, disputatious, restless type of present American femininity, had not developed in the days whereof we write. Women in the North, of strong purpose and individuality, of irrepressible impulse to be doing, freed themselves of it by heroic service in battle-field hospi-

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tals and in the Sanitary Commission. But these were generally of "a certain age," not blooming with the roseate charm of youth that induces men along the way to turn, to look and comment, to the secret anguish of the male creature holding the protective attitude toward them. The Southern women had, of course, been forced into independent action through acute necessity.

The very fact of the superb indifference and unconsciousness of these two charges of his to anything but the object they had in view, had made the present excursion a trial to the red-headed young man. He saw that the mental attitude of the older lady proceeded from the previous isolation of her walk through life, among people of the refined and cultured classes, as well as from long habit of ignoring her humbler fellow beings, unless she could either do them good, or engage them in her service.

The other—a young girl—thought nothing of the people she met and what they thought of her, simply because she was overwhelmingly preoccupied with anxiety to carry out a scheme that seemed to be on the verge of failure. Their escort could not verily comprehend the blank despair that seemed to be settling upon her face when the longshoremen and fishermen, to whom they had successively applied, flatly refused to convoy the party across the wide expanse of water, now heaving under a chill autumnal wind, that divided them from the fortress looming dark upon a distant island, toward which her eye looked longingly.

Evidently, the new arrivals were looked upon with suspicion, and even the promise of pay, elevated to a daz-



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zling altitude, did not further convince the obdurate ones. No man Jack of the watermen would engage for the requested transportation, all declaring that not only was the tide "ag'in" the effort, but that orders from the fortress strictly forbade conveying to it loafers, curiosity-seekers, and the public in general, unprovided with special permits. Though the war was over and done with, there still survived throughout the land a wholesome respect for military rule, which no neighbor of the post cared to forfeit lightly.

By the enunciation of these arguments, neither lady appeared to be convinced. They protested themselves ready to meet all consequences, redoubled their urgency, and, in the end, so moved the band of law-respecting patriots with sympathy, that their chief spokesman cast about him for some method of transferring the responsibility.

"See here, strangers," he said, after an interval of thought, "it ain't as we're disbleegin', but even if we hedn't no principles at stake, there ain't a boat among the lot of us fitten to kerry passengers 'cep'n it's ole Zekel Fogg's, who lives in that little blue cottage on the point yander."

The two ladies looked over at the blue cottage on the point, and beheld rocking on the dancing waves off-shore beyond it, a tiny sailboat at anchor, a mere cockleshell in appearance with which to breast the rough water ahead, but they did not blanch.

"Oh! thank you so *very* much," they exclaimed, fervently, setting off without ado in the direction indicated, followed with lagging feet by their escort.

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"Putty smart trick that, Cephas," remarked one of the boatmen to the proposer of Zekel Fogg.

"Oh! Zekel kin stand the battery," returned the other, grinning broadly.

"Shouldn't wonder if them gals downed the old boy," commented a third. "He's a kind of a lady's man, is Zekel, owin' to his hevin' lived a bachelore. If he'd be'n married as long as I have, he'd not find it so hard to say no to a teasin' woman."

At Zekel's, the same experience befell the applicants. The skipper, a son of Anak, in shirt, trousers, and gal-luses, repeated the familiar objections to their plan, and upon being pressed hard by the girl, wavered, coughed, and guessed his boat wa'n't in any state for womenfolk, seein' as he'd been fishin' in her yisteddy.

"That wouldn't make the smallest difference," exclaimed the elder lady, seeing a glimpse of hope in his melting attitude, and bestowing on him the very sweetest of her smiles. "We like fish, Captain, and are sure you will get us over splendidly."

"Oh! please do, Captain Fogg," urged the girl, "and we will love you all our lives."

Zekel was fairly overpowered. For consistency's sake, he hemmed and hawed a while, but ended by conducting the trio to his landing-stage and doing the best he could at short notice, to provide for his unwonted passengers, by covering the inside of the boat with a clean sail. Monster of brawn and muscle although he was, the Captain possessed a soft heart, with a shrewd understanding of some of the tender phases of weak human nature, and, instinctively, his suspicion settled upon the

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girl as the one of his employers who held the greatest stake in the expedition. Upon her were chiefly bestowed his suave explanations of existent difficulties in gaining admittance to the fort, his apprehension that their trouble in getting there would be thrown away. They set out nevertheless, and as the wind quickened their progress, and they came soon into rough water, shipping enough of it from time to time to startle an unaccustomed passenger, the skipper would turn to consult the same face, to be always met by a gleam of exultant gladness in eyes that held no shadow of a fear!

To speak truth, this young woman was far happier than she had been in months. Flying over the angry, darkling waves, the wind singing in her ears, meeting the spray showers heedlessly, her spirits rose, her color glowed, hope was the helmsman of her heart.

For indeed since the forlorn moment when she had contrived to be near him in the court-room corridor, to whisper reassurance in the prisoner's ear, every effort of Cecil Dare's life had been bestowed upon the freeing of Lancelot Carlyle. While he remained in the Arsenal shadowed by a worse calamity, she had trodden the streets outside, yearning over him. After he had been removed to Fort Delaware, chiefly through the efforts of friends and sympathizers secured by her, she had accepted the hospitality of the chief of these, a lady of New Orleans, who had long known her family, to remove with her to Newport pending further negotiations in Carlyle's behalf. To this charming personage, Madame de Chercroix, who had grown to love Cecil like a sister, she was

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also indebted for the financial backing that made their present excursion possible.

Young Donald Lyndsay, while their boat rose and plunged forward upon leaping waves that showered them with spray, asked himself ruefully, how it was that he had become the personal conductor of an expedition he could not doubt would end in failure and mortification for all concerned.

He had met the two ladies but recently, in Newport, at the house of his friend and patron, Colonel Dick Claxton, and, by him, had been led to tell them of his acquaintance with the Carlyles in Richmond, and ultimately of his success in arranging a correspondence between Lancelot and his distressed family.

From the moment of this admission, Lyndsay had felt that he was doomed to the service of a feminine intrigue. Madame de Chercroix, an old sweetheart of Claxton's, widowed some time previously, and coming North for change of air and scene, had taken up with enthusiasm Miss Dare's efforts in Lancelot's behalf. Lyndsay had not thought it necessary to inquire the reason for this zeal on Miss Dare's part. All women in those troublous times were working, one way or another, for the victims of the war. Claxton had told him that Madame de Chercroix's *protégée* came of an old Catholic family in Maryland, whose chief representative had made a *mésalliance* with a certain dashing Miss Molly Ball, the daughter of a tavern-keeper in his neighborhood; and, in consequence of the ill feeling resulting therefrom in his family connection, had moved to Virginia to live near Foxcroft. There, Cecil and her twin

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brother, Selden, were born and had grown up, and there, doubtless, Cecil had made acquaintance, in youth, with the nephew and heir of Mr. Julian Carlyle. At the outbreak of the civil war, the Dare family had moved farther South. Upon her father's death in 1861, the girl had been sent to New Orleans to be educated in a convent school, while the boy and his mother became notorious as spies in the Confederate service, and, dropped by their reputable friends, had now fled to live abroad. Lyndsay felt pity for Miss Dare for her misfortunes of relationship, and for Mona's sake, felt that he could not hold back from any opportunity to carry aid and comfort to her imprisoned lover. But, as they approached their goal, he would have been more than glad to be well out of the affair.

Poor Cecil Dare alone knew what a weight she bore up those landing-steps, where they were curtly challenged by a sentry. While a soldier carried away their visiting-cards for presentation to the Commandant, with the request for a brief interview with that functionary, her head grew dizzy, her heart seemed to dissolve within her, her veins to run water instead of blood. Fled was her pride, her fine courage, as she stood gazing up at the gloomy walls, the sentried ramparts, the obtruding guns above, and down at the stagnant moat beneath. Around the fort the dull little island was dotted with officers' quarters, barracks, and other military buildings, all dreary enough in contrast with the surroundings of happier lives. What was she, to walk free and erect among her kind, when Lancelot Carlyle was shut away from light and good-fellowship inside those walls,

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because those belonging to her had sinned against the law?

It was a thrilling moment when the soldier, returning, requested them, with official brevity, to follow him into the office of the Commandant.

They passed across the bridge, under the dread portal, through somber passages, and found themselves in the presence of the chief officer of the fort, who sat at his desk, eying them with a bored and not very friendly gaze. If all the friends of all his thousands of rebel prisoners—so argued the good man—had considered themselves entitled to make such morning calls upon him, the Commandant, where would the routine of work have betaken itself, or the discipline of the fort? Positively, he must discountenance the whole business and rid himself of an intolerable nuisance!

From its brief survey of Lyndsay, who met with but gruff reception, the official eye passed on to rest upon the two women. Involuntarily he arose, his gaze softened, he asked civilly what he could do for them.

Madame de Chercroix, who in the whole course of her petted life had never before met with the suspicion of a rebuff, was now the one who seemed on the point of betaking herself to the feminine refuge of tears. It was Cecil Dare whose crest rose fearlessly, who stepped forward to face the arbiter of their fate, with her whole eager, ardent spirit flashing in her eyes, asking leave to see or to send in a letter to his prisoner, subject to the presence or inspection of the General. Lyndsay, for the first time vaguely divining her underlying sentiment for the prisoner, was lost in wonder and dismay. Madame

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de Chercroix, who had suspected it all along, was a little taken aback by the outspoken demonstration, but at heart applauded her brave, true Cecil, and sent up a little quick prayer for her success.

The bare mention of Carlyle's name seemed to work wonders for their cause. The General's face cleared, lightened. He looked again, scrutinizingly, at the three visitors, his gaze lingering longest upon the youngest of them.

"You ladies are no doubt of the Colonel's family?" he asked. "Sisters? Or cousins, perhaps?"

"No," answered Madame de Chercroix, faintly. She was wishing she could say "Yes."

"No," said Cecil Dare, bravely, looking him full in the eyes.

"Hum!" said the General.

He went back to his desk, made a show of turning over papers, then abruptly, with a gleam of kindly determination in his eyes, called to an orderly, despatching him upon some errand unknown to them.

"Madam," he then observed, addressing himself to the chaperon, "if you will entrust this young lady to my care, and you and Mr. Lyndsay will take seats here for a while, I should like to show her some glimpses of the fortress which, in future days, I think it will please her to remember."

Madame de Chercroix smiled—again the *grande dame*, in her most gracious attitude.

"Willingly, General. My young lady will be always in your debt."

Lyndsay, astonished and bewildered at the turn

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affairs were taking, was pacing to and fro. Things seemed, indeed, to have gotten away from him as well as his sovereign lady, Mona, when Cecil Dare was thus thrust to the front in Lancelot's affairs.

He cast a glance of vexed inquiry upon Madame de Chercroix, who, dropping upon a chair, was looking quietly jubilant. Miss Dare promptly followed the Commandant, who, as they left the room together, held open the door for her with distinguished courtesy and an almost paternal kindness. The color flamed in Lyndsay's face. He did not like to interfere, and to relieve himself, walked gloomily back and forth, again condemning his folly in letting himself be mixed with the affair.

In another part of the same building a scene was enacting that had known but few variants for many a long week. Lancelot sat at the table beneath his casement; before him ranged a row of volumes taken from the Post Library, a list of which was to float down the years in memory of the solace they had been to those endless, solitary moments when he heard nothing but the monotonous tramping of sentinels in the corridor; when no other voice spoke to him save the magic ones that bore from their pages to his brain the eloquence of the ages, peopling his dim cell with a beauty and glory and power no man could take away. Of the poets, there were Shakespeare and Wordsworth, Milton and Young, Burns and Cowper. Many historians kindled his mind with the stories of other wars and the statecraft leading up to them—there were also Lieber's *Civil Liberty*, Sir



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W. Hamilton's *Metaphysics and Logic*, Mill's *Political Economy*, Whately's *Future State*, and Kinglake's *Crimea*. Dickens and George Eliot were seen crowding several of Anthony Trollope's delightful chronicles of every day, and the *Mysteries of Udolpho* jostled the *Autobiography of General Scott*. A Spanish grammar afforded him some daily hours of study, and one or two Greek and Latin books made leaden Time fly where it would else have limped.

To-day none of these old friends claimed the prisoner's attention. He was awearied of print and strangely unquiet. He felt the need of some tonic reminder to stir his soul from its growing apathy. Taking pencil and paper, he traced out names—names destined to ring through history—a list of the battles his regimental flag had won the right to inscribe in honor upon its folds.

A goodly show when he had finished it: Manassas, Mechanicsville, Gaines Mill, Frazer's Farm, Malvern Hill, Cedar Mountain, Warrenton Springs, Second Manassas (both days), Ox Hill (Chantilly), Harper's Ferry, Antietam, Shepherdstown, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville (all three days), Bristoe Station, Mine Run, Wilderness, Spottsylvania Court House (three days of that, too), Jericho Ford, Cold Harbor, First Reams Station, Battle of September 30, 1864, right of Petersburg; Battle of Squirrel Level Road, Battle of the Dalney House; Burgess Mill, October 27, 1864; Hatcher's Run, February 6 and 7, 1865; action on Petersburg Front, 1865—and so on, ending in the grand, sad climax—Five Forks before Appomattox station, evening before Surrender, April 8th!

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Ah! his blood was not stagnant now; and this didn't include what he was pleased to style a "thundering lot of little scrimmages."

Where, among the tattered colors treasured in cathedral naves and historic palaces the world over, was written a longer, grander list? What fights had been hotter, what more valiant foes had met in them? In brief words, that flag of his, followed so ardently, had been seen in every general action fought by the Army of Northern Virginia from first Manassas to Appomattox. By Heaven, he had lived!

The bare thought of it was like a trumpet-call. The stone walls around him seemed to melt away; the grated window through which the sunset was wont to gleam vanished into space—he was free again, his own master, the iron throats of the guns were sounding, the proud hopes of the young Confederacy were firing his blood anew, his war-horse was under him, his men were cheering all along the line as they swept into the fight—God! it was glorious!

His door creaked upon its hinges. Lance turned, vexed to be brought back, no doubt, to the cold reality of his convict soldier servant, carrying a tray containing pickled pork, baked beans, raw onions bought with his own money, and perhaps a square of moist gingerbread. This was no moment for a hunk of gingerbread!

The greatest surprise since his arrest last May, awaited him. It was not his soldier, but the General's orderly, bearing a message that made Lance want to "whoop with solid joy."

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"Better be careful, sir," ventured the orderly, as the guard outside looked in reprovingly.

Both men wore, however, a look of suppressed leniency combined with a smirk of mild intelligence. In some subtle fashion, it had been borne in upon them that the Colonel's extraordinary summons "to see a lady" had something to do with the sentimental passion that makes the whole world kin.

"Hurry, orderly!" cried the prisoner, joyfully.

While Cecil, in the General's wake, threaded devious ways and dingy corridors, no word passed between them as to her errand to the fort. As he paused here and there, in conventional explanation of localities, her heart flew before her like a bird. What he thought, what anybody thought, had ceased to vex her soul in the face of the overpowering joy of anticipation. But when they stepped across the threshold of a door leading into a gloomy central court, with high walls of masonry, she uttered an involuntary exclamation of dismay.

"Look up, over yonder, into the casemate facing us," said a kind voice in her ear. "That is part of the exercise ground of our star prisoners, and perhaps—I don't know—you *might* recognize a friend."

She obeyed. It was as if a sunburst had illumined the whole dull place. For there, in the casemate high above, a guard on either side of him, a cannon in his rear, stood her prisoner, radiant, boy-like, waving his hat in air!

Vanished her doubts and fears, forgotten her long hours of anguish since their parting. Nothing re-

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mained but the pure delight of seeing him once again. And surely, never before in the happenings of this stronghold, where so many caged, impatient spirits had borne starved silence and forced oblivion of the outer world, had a gladder moment come to one of them than was reflected upon his face!

Their eyes had but met in a too brief, avid gaze, when the guards signed to him to fall back. Another wave of the hat and he was gone. Imploringly, she turned toward her guide.

"What? You aren't satisfied?" he asked, in a rallying tone.

"Yes, yes. Thank you a thousand times. But, oh——!"

"But, oh!" he repeated, with pretended gruffness. "Why, my young lady, more than this would be out of all reason, don't you see?"

"I see," she said, sadly, with filling eyes.

"This way, please," he added, abruptly, striding ahead. She noticed, however, that he had again despatched a messenger to precede them, and that they were taking a different way from that by which they came.

A desperate new hope sprang up in Cecil's breast, but she dared not give it voice. Her feet followed him, strengthening as they mounted stairs and traced out narrow entries, her thoughts still coursing eagerly ahead.

"Now I will leave you for a few moments," said the General, as they finally emerged into daylight under an arch of masonry, at the rear of a seaward-pointing gun. "I shall return almost immediately," he added, with a

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twinkle in his eye. "I hope you will not miss me overmuch."

So saying, he waved a beneficent hand toward a barricade of stout wooden palings dividing the casemate from the gallery beyond.

## XI

**H**OW in the world did you manage it?" asked Lance, from behind the barricade. His voice was shaken by wonder and delight. "Did you ride through the air on Starlight, who developed wings for the occasion? And, oh, how good, how good, how good of you to come!"

She felt that then, if ever, it behooved her not to give way.

"I came over from Newcastle, in a rather fishy old sailboat, with friends who are chaperoning me conventionally," she said, steadying her nerves with a tremendous effort. "It is owing to the heavenly goodness of your chief that I am here now. He must want very much to give you a token of his sympathy."

"He is a trump, and we are the best of friends. But I never dreamed of such luck as this. I thought when I saw you standing down there like a fairy apparition in the gloomy old court, that to have you wave to me was enough. But this—this! There is only one thing lacking. I want to feel as well as see. By no possibility can I squeeze my hand through the space between these boards. But yours—so slim, so fine, it can easily come to me."

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She blushed, but at once slipped her bared right hand through the barricade, where it was held for a moment in the hottest, gladdest, eagerest grasp of man she was likely ever to meet again.

"Jove! this is immense," cried he. "Now am I ready to declare that I have spent the summer famously. I am even recruited with content for a longer enlistment in a dungeon."

"Don't, please. It breaks my heart!" she sighed, the tears, in spite of her, now welling and overflowing. "But who knows how long we may be permitted to talk? I must make haste to tell you that we have now the brightest hopes of your release—without much delay, unless certain powers that are persistently obnoxious find out new obstacles, and without trial, we are told."

"A trial in this case would certainly bring them up with a round turn," he said, grimly.

"I know—who knows better? It is too dreadful to remember. If it is any comfort to you to feel that I have suffered with you—daily, hourly, and all the pangs of self-reproach in addition——"

"Do you suppose that pleases me?" he interrupted. "Let us call it fortune of war, and cry quits. You were a brave, true girl, driven to the wall in a terrible predicament, and what you did——"

"Will be worked out in atonement if I live," she said, floods of crimson suffusing her fair face.

"Let us waste no more of our precious time in talking about that. Tell me of yourself. You are well, evidently—you say you are with friends. You have not, then, rejoined your mother?"

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"No," she answered, sadly. "But I know, at least, where she is, and that she prospers. I have found a benefactress in the dearest, most enchanting woman that breathes, who is spending the summer at Newport. She is here, now—she came with me to the fortress, and is waiting below, full of sympathy for you. I dared tell her my whole story as far as you are concerned, and she has been all that is noblest, most patient with me. She is Madame de Chercroix."

"Oh! I remember her perfectly. I met her once in New Orleans, and, like everybody else, adored her. How strange that it should have been she who is my instrument of happy Fate!"

The General coughed lightly as he came strolling back, his feet ringing upon the stone flooring.

"If the young lady has seen all she requires to know of our fortress—" he began, almost bashfully.

His eyes, traveling from one eager, joy-lighted face to the other, became suffused with a very unmilitary expression of softness. He gulped down what he was intending to say further, and, turning his back, walked briskly away again.

"Who says the milk of human kindness is dried up?" exclaimed the prisoner. "He knows that after this, I shall be a very lamb among prisoners. Oh! if I had but one single word that would concentrate all my delight in having you come here!"

She suppressed the answering thrill. "We must hurry and talk business. There are one or two points in the movement for your release of which you must be informed; one or two questions I must ask you. It is chiefly



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due to Madame de Chercroix's wonderful tact and influence that we are succeeding so well. They say your chances have never been so good."

Rapidly they interchanged queries and answers important to his case. His words came in an ardent flow, his unconquerable spirit welled up in buoyant phrases. While he spoke, all fear, all sorrow, seemed to take wing, the horizon to brighten and widen illimitably; and, poor, ruined prisoner though he was, she felt that he held the future in his sling. His virile courage dominated her weakness, silenced even her regrets. His generous assurance that she need never again feel a pang concerning her share in his great misfortune, brought tears of gratitude welling to her eyes.

"Come, I can't stand that," he said, quickly. "Remember, it's your mission to cheer, not sadden me. Let me tell you that since your letter through Mrs. Beaton, I've been a new man, full of high hope and courage. And if ever I'm free of this little entanglement——"

"If? *When!* You will be, you must be, soon. Why, you are among the very last prisoners of war."

"Well, *WHEN* I am free, I will make my pilgrimage to you, and try to persuade you of all you have been to me."

"Your first pilgrimage? Your very, very first?" she repeated, happily.

Her voice, her eyes, her cheeks were traitorous. In a lightning flash he saw the gulf over which they stood. The effect was like a fall of snow upon blossoming roses. He realized that she could have no suspicion of his relation to another woman, and could not doubt what sorrow

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that knowledge must bring. It was a sudden and dreadful awakening. He must speak now without delay. In all honor, he must not let her go without a full knowledge of his engagement to Monimia. The trustful look in Cecil's eyes, the very expression of the General's back as he stood awaiting their farewell, were like stings to Lancelot. She, looking at him, her rapt soul in her gaze, saw with astonishment the change that had passed upon his handsome, open face. He had shut his lips, had grown pale and constrained, a cloud had drifted across the warm sparkle of his eyes.

Her pride, taking the alarm, whispered that he felt he had gone too far with her. She was pierced by a pang of bitter conviction that, to him, she must be only a nebulous personage, a girl of adventure, outside the pale of the women of his own class, and shame took her in its grip. She hurried into concealing speech.

"Good-by. I see you are recalling what we'd both been trying to forget. You were, indeed, most forgiving to stoop to speak to me again," she said.

"Surely you don't mean that," he said, with an effort to recover his former buoyant tone. "I must admire, respect you heartily. There is every reason why we should be friends. But, for a time, perhaps——"

"Yes—for a time?" she repeated, blankly, dreading what was to come.

"It might be better—best—for both of us to try not to dwell too much upon the things that brought us to know each other—at least, until the great pain has died out of the memory, for both. To me, you will always be a true heroine—brave, noble, and deserving

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of all honor and reverence. But our paths will lie apart. When I'm my own man again, I have a duty to which my brain, these hands, and my best powers must be devoted before all."

"Your home people—oh! of course," she said, trying to warm to her theme. "From Colonel Claxton, from Mr. Lyndsay, we have heard of their sorrows and their brave endurance. For Miss Carlyle, especially, no praise seems to be too high."

"Well done!" cried Lancelot. "Dear, unselfish little Mona, she deserves all that can be said of her. I ought to tell you," he added, after a painful pause, "that my cousin and I . . . are to be married some day."

"Shall we go back to your friends, Miss Dare?" said the General, coming up. "I am rather afraid they will be wondering what I have done with you."

"Not when I have told them what wonderful kindness you showed in letting me talk so long with an old friend in trouble," she answered, steadily. "Good-by, Colonel Carlyle, and be sure I shall lose no time in letting your family in Richmond know how well the Government is keeping up your health and spirits."

She was going without a handshake, when the appeal in his eyes smote her with compunction. Bravely, under the General's eyes, she again thrust her hand—a cold hand now—between the bars. Lance clasped it with fingers as chilly as her own. He knew, at last, without a peradventure, what had been actually palpitating between them—what warm, living thing he had been obliged to kill!

## XII



UTUMN lapsed into winter, and the first Christmas after the fall of the Confederacy was at hand. To most Richmond folk, the season brought little but sad remembrance and the galling sense of poverty, from which only the very young could struggle out into insouciance. Monimia Carlyle, with her vision suddenly awakened by stern responsibility, great personal sorrow, keen lamenting for the Lost Cause—and by something intangible that had escaped out of her girl's life—had a sense of the weight of many added years, and wondered if she had ever been a child.

An ever-present care, in addition to the growing dependence of her father upon her loving services, was that Lance, all efforts to the contrary, remained still a prisoner of war. In latter days, no news whatever came to them from the fortress, and a sort of obstinate silence seemed to settle around her cousin's fate. In the household in Richmond the ex-Colonel's kinspeople now thought of him with dull aching instead of the old, keen yearning to get him back.

It was a cruel winter to most of Mona's friends, and the girl recognized that her lot was less hard than that of many of those around her. The money strain was but

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little eased by the proceeds of the sale of their country home, since her father, with a gleam of his former imperious will, amid the semisenile expressions of his present fancies and desires, had directed their lawyer to divert a large portion of this sum into meeting certain liabilities incurred in the zeal of his belief in the triumph of Southern arms. In vain Mr. Chester set forth to his client the possibility and prudence of delay in making these payments. It was a last desperate casting upon the funeral pyre of the old man's hopes, of his high sense of honor, the jewel that had survived his actual and mental wreck!

They were very poor, very sad, and Mona's chief pleasure was in remembering happier days. At this season of the year, it had always been the Carlyle custom to journey out of town in their own carriage to spend a fortnight at the Manor, sending Britannicus and Phœbe on ahead to open the house, stock the larder, light the furnace fires, and pile upon the andirons of every fireplace hickory logs and fat pine kindling, ready to leap into sparkling welcome when wheels, sounding upon the bridge across the "crick," a quarter of a mile down the avenue, should herald the approach of family and guests.

Then would the rambling old mansion, built from an English model in the form of the letter H, awake into a stir of joyous hospitality.

To make ready for Christmas eve, the house party, directing grinning Gumbos and happy Cuffs in their aromatic toil, were in the habit of despoiling the woods, by and large, of cart-loads of red-berried holly, arbor

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vitæ, laurel, ground-pine, and all the growing winter things that hoard summer's verdure. A delight to Mona had always been these quests of greenery amid Nature's temples pillared with tall pines, her nimble feet treading, as if winged, over crackling leaf-carpets and vast cushions of emerald and silver moss. What thrills had come into her veins with every inhalation of that crisp cold air of the Southern winter—with every glance upward at the transparent sapphire of the sky! How sweet the sound of the negroes' songs over their loading of the carts, the far bay of hounds in the kennels, the peevish calls of crows disturbed, and arising from the green mist of pinetops, upon this unwonted invasion of human life below!

Then, the return to the house, following the carts, and watching their contents transferred to the gun-room, where, upon the stone floor, the wreath-makers were allowed by the hostess to shower rubbish at their will! What weaving of rope garlands and bunching of green sprigs upon barrel-hoops, further bedecked with the berries of holly, spicewood, and bittersweet, to garland the wide central hall of the mansion, always the core of merriment when the Manor was full of company!

And company, be it understood, meant to the Carlyles and their kind far more than it has ever done to Northern Americans, or to sophisticated Britishers, unemotionally bidding their guests in instalments, and mechanically entertaining them with conventions handed down by generations of antecedent householders.

In old Virginia, visitors who had once accepted an invitation, and were expected, became sacrosanct in the

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host's eyes. A failure on their part to arrive conveyed genuine, keen regret. From the time they alighted upon the door-step, up to the moment of departure, every living thing indoors cherished them with a special proprietary interest. The very dogs wagged their tails in the jocund spirit of universal welcome. No matter if the guest were capricious or inconsiderate; if he brought a friend or two for whom no beds were procurable short of the family vacating their own and resorting to mattresses upon the floors of cold forsaken eyries; no matter if he crowded the stable with his steeds, the servants' hall with his followers, the nurseries, even, with his superfluous progeny, he was installed, cosseted, comforted with the best there was to give. And sometimes, if finding himself lapped in well-being, the unbidden guest stayed on for weeks until it suited him to stir, he was still made welcome by the unremonstrant hosts. For that was what Virginian hospitality implied. And whatever exaggerations of the light of other days in the old South may be attributed to some of us who look back at them through the Claude Lorrain glass of loving memory, there was never any denying Virginian hospitality.

When the house was full to overflowing; when neighbors, hastily invited in, swelled the dinner list to necessitate the setting of two tables, one meal following the other (elders first, and short shrift to their toasts), and there was a roomful of eager, merry youths and maidens awaiting summons to the festal board; when an impromptu ball came afterward, or tableaux, or charades, or a sleighing party to surprise some friend or

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kinsman many miles away; when the servants were run off their feet, and the cooks kept hard at it day and night—then a Virginian Christmas party called itself a success!

It must be said that upon the hostess fell the brunt of the enterprise, since on her devolved, not only the hard work of giving out supplies and arranging the menus, but of making, with her own hands the sweet dishes, icing cakes, arranging desserts, then returning, sweet and unruffled, to take her place as the Lady Chate-laine, and presiding over her feast as if she had never whipped an egg or cracked a sugar-loaf.

As to the poor downtrodden sons and daughters of Africa, whose sweat of toil paid for the senseless enjoyment of their betters, it is a fact that they regarded with far greater respect, and were happier working for the masters of establishments where such entertainings were the rule, not the exception. They loved to turn night into day, to run, tripping each other up to serve the merry gentry, to mass themselves in halls and doorways, watching the dance, listening to the music, or to crowd peering through windows, their dark faces aglow with sympathetic glee, nudging each other, whispering praises, or openly adjuring some especial favorite among the guests, as he or she passed by. The maids would sit up half the night for the pleasure and privilege of drawing silk stockings from a belle's dainty feet, or enduing her into her gossamer and lace nightgown, of tucking her in bed, letting fly the while Parthian arrows of wit concerning some suitor of the hour. The "boys" would hang around the men's quar-



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ters, eager to be employed, to be joked with, to be pitted against each other in any competition for small coins, proud to be valets to their master's guests. And even the kitchen deities, who never saw the fun, reflected it, moving more briskly amid their pots and pans.

These were the "before-the-war" doings, that Mona, now, in her "days of drear December," oftenest conjured up to gladden the dull hours. The Carlyles had not attempted any celebration the first Christmas of the war, and after that had come the gap left by Harry, that in no way could be filled or bridged. Her father and mother had, the year before, made a strenuous attempt to renew bygones, going to pass the week of the twenty-fifth of December at their country home. In lieu of dancing and romping guests, they had carried out to Carlyle Manor a few maimed convalescent soldiers, whom they regaled with such make-believe substitutes for former dainties as the pinch of the times allowed. But it had been a lame and halting Christmas at best, Mona felt, as how should it not, with gloom abroad over the land, friends falling in battle by the score, and at eventide always Harry's foot upon the silent stair—Harry's voice calling for his gun or horse that never came!

Ah, no! It was all gone, vanished forever, the gleam and glitter of old Christmas time at Carlyle Manor. She remembered how she had once told Donald Lyndsay, eager for local color, how Virginian proprietors were wont to disport themselves when the gladdest of Christian festivals came round. Lyndsay had listened eagerly, made her give him every detail of her

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childish memories, and reproved himself fiercely, when, upon ending, she had broken down in a fit of weeping. She did not know how often and how tenderly, afterward, when by that queer freak of Fortune's wheel Lyndsay himself had come to be the owner of the property, he had thought of this incident.

Mona never heard from Lyndsay now. She was glad in a way that this was so, for with dawning womanhood, she had come to fully apprehend that the moment of recognizing her first love had been also the moment of such despair as never before had grazed the surface of her young life, much less sunk deep into it. She had felt that he was good and kind and wise and true, and that if all other things had been equal, she must have gloried in choosing him for her mate. But the barrier between them had been immovable as Destiny, even if there were not Lance.

Lance, for whom every fiber of her being throbbed in generous sympathy! Forsake Lance, poor, ruined, imprisoned, while the other was on the wave of riches and success! No, a thousand times no, she said to herself, hotly. Anything rather than a failure of moral sense like that. All the Carlyles who went before her in their family history had been faithful. Faithful to their faith, faithful in their love, faithful in their death. She would not betray her line, even if she were only a poor, weak little girl, beaten and stranded by adverse circumstances. She would face this trouble as she had faced the others. So she had put Lyndsay out of her mind, and did her best to fix all her loyal heart upon Lancelot, her promised husband.

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There had been no one to tell of these distresses, for Mona was proud and had few intimates, having always been content to give her best confidence to her mother, and let the world take what remained. Her father, before all, would have been most pained at such a defection from her patriotic creed. He would have withered her with sardonic contempt, as a renegade to her flag and her country's honor! And poor Mona herself had believed so ardently in what they had been suffering for. The mirage of a free triumphing Confederacy had had the best worship of four years of her life. Her father had taught her that the right of secession belonged by law to the people of any State desiring to withdraw from the Union. The words "rebel" and "traitor" touched her but lightly as applied to her friends and fellows, since her conviction was fixed that they could not have done otherwise than attempt to win their independence from the North.

Bred in the bone to believe in her own side, there was nevertheless a broad-minded simplicity in her make-up that despite her inexperience and tender age, caused the girl to see that their foe, too, had been fighting for a principle. While Lyndsay had remained under their roof, he had not allowed himself to more than touch upon these questions with her. But she had been struck by his saying that all the glory and power of the future of their land was to be maintained, as it had been won, only by a united nation. It had come to her often since, to wonder, pathetically, if she ever again might have the privilege of any share in the pride of a nation. It seemed cruel that, young as she was, she should be con-

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demned always to mourn over a banner wrapped in crape! But it would have been a stout-hearted advocate who could venture to advance such plea to old Alexius Carlyle, a wounded lion driven into his lair, licking his hurt as the life-blood drained from him. In these days his mind was generally clouded, but, now and then, he would emerge from his confusion of times, places, and people, equipped with all his old intellectual brilliancy and pungent wit, and then woe to the antagonist who crossed his path!

Mona saw also that his physical strength was declining, that he was but holding himself together, as it were, for Lancelot's return, and for the marriage between them, the thought of which had now become an obsession. Hardly a day passed that Alexius did not allude to it in some fashion or other. Whatever else was dimmed in his thoughts, that remained a clear purpose of his declining days.

To be rid of the exquisite pain occasioned by every turn of her meditation upon these themes, Mona had thrown herself into church work for the poor of their parish, and, a rare needlewoman, filled her spare time with the fabrication of small gifts for girl friends, and for the negroes of their household who, although not in her father's pay, still haunted their kitchen, and looked to her for sympathy and advice in all their doings. For her this was bound to be a wretched sort of a Christmas, and the more outside people she could help to make happy, the better for her and them.

The eve of Christmas found her seated by the window of the drawing-room, near the recess in the wall

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where hung the little portrait of her long-gone aunt, that might have been Mona's breathing self. On a table before her were heaped sundry charming objects of leather, satin, and old brocades, rifled from an attic chest, into the fabrication of which had gone stitches Titania might have set with the thorn of a wild rose. A fire of soft coal burned in the low grate, and here and there, in vases, were grouped white azaleas and yellow-haired acacia, calla-lilies and fragrant roses, sent in by a lady of her neighborhood, fortunate in the possession of a greenhouse surviving the wreck of war. To be surrounded by these beauties was to Mona always the keenest of sensory delights, and her friend rarely left her unsupported by their solace. The long low room, twinkling in the firelight, with its Colonial furnishings in white enameled wood, the walls covered with mirrors and pictures in richly gilded frames, the antique Turkey rug in the center of a polished floor, the cabinets and tables littered with old Chelsea, Spode, and Dresden images and figurines, presented an appearance certainly not suggestive of the sorrow and poverty actually stalking at large throughout the spacious chambers of the dwelling.

Mona had inherited from her mother that feminine attribute of home-making, that can convert less plastic material than she possessed into the semblance of an inviting center of friendly intercourse. Into this room her father rarely penetrated, and she was free to work her will with it. The fancies of its late dear mistress in arranging furniture, in draping curtains and disposing ornaments were religiously preserved, and day

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after day the girl sat in her mother's chair, striving to reproduce the home atmosphere so consoling to her thoughts.

The door opened, and, without announcement, the familiar figure of their family physician came in to her from the library where he had been in conference with her father.

"Dr. Shirley, you have bad news for me?" she exclaimed, reading his kindly face.

"No, my dear child, not that, thank God. But I am troubled by a new phase of Mr. Carlyle's fancy, which we have to handle and humor with continual nicety. He is now set upon the idea that you and he are intending to go up to the Manor to spend the holidays, and has asked me to be of the party. No putting aside of the question will content him, poor, dear man, and I am at my wits' end how to deal with it."

"I've seen lately," she answered, her eyes filling, "that the fact of his having sold the property has faded totally from his mind. I thought best to tell him I had heard that the new owner, Mr. Sharpless, had put the house in thorough repair, and had secured General and Mrs. Beaton to live there and take care of it. He showed some natural feeling, said a few sharp things about Yankee ideas of 'repair' not suiting an old Virginia residence, and wondered how Beaton, an ex-Confederate General, could demean himself by being hired 'help' for a man named, at his baptism, Amasa."

"Sounds like him," said the doctor, with twinkling eyes.

"I explained that I heard the Beatons were almost

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penniless, and that Mr. Sharpless, through our Mr. Chester, acting as his agent, had engaged them on very liberal terms, and had shown really delicate feeling and consideration, giving them *carte blanche* to live at the Manor, reserving only a room for himself when he should feel like running down for the shooting."

"Glad to hear it, I'm sure," grunted the doctor, rather unwillingly.

"And there is absolutely no hint of cutting the timber, doctor. See how unjust we were to this poor Mr. Sharpless, who must be far better than we thought. When I ask Mr. Chester, however, what sort of man our successor is, I get only the scantest answers, so I fancy he has not succeeded in pleasing our kind old friend."

"I wish to Heaven you could manage, in some way, to take your father out to the Manor, if even for a day," blurted out the doctor, who had been gathering courage to tell her an unpleasant fact. "He is just in that condition of nervous strain with dwelling on this idea, that I can't tell at what moment he may break down altogether. It would surely do him no harm to take the drive in fine weather like this, and it would, probably, act the other way, you see. I believe it might be done without much trouble, by explaining matters to General and Mrs. Deaton."

Mona sat irresolute, the color burning in her cheeks, her brows knitted in perplexity. She was pondering upon both such great things as the return of Alexis Carlyle to the home of his fathers, bowed with age and infirmity, broken by self-sacrifice, craving as a boon

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the right to set his tottering feet once more across the threshold, and such petty things as the price the livery-man would ask for a hack in which they might go and come, and how they could venture to impose themselves upon Mrs. Beaton, whom they did not even know.

At this juncture, the door of the drawing-room opened again, and Britannicus, who at many odd moments found himself on duty in the house, tiptoed mysteriously toward her.

"A lady to see you, Miss Mona. She says she is not acquainted with you, ma'am, but you are third cousins once removed on your mother's side. Mrs. Beaton, Miss, if it's not disturbing you with the doctor."

"Not a bit of it," said Dr. Shirley, his face lighting; "I'm off this minute, and if I'm not mistaken, Mona, my dear child, the Lord is showing you a way to get your father his heart's desire. I hope so, earnestly. Tell Mrs. Beaton your trouble frankly, and I'll wager she'll welcome you at the Manor with open arms."

In a moment more Mrs. Beaton came fluttering in. She was a small round lady, in marked contrast to her stalwart husband, and no stress of fortune had been able to subdue her lightness of heart and indomitable good temper. Apparently under the influence of some emotion she was resolved not to betray, she began by shaking hands with Mona, and ended by kissing her fervently.

"You dear child! I am not going to make a stranger of you, since we are really kin, even if it's a long way off—the Chattertons, you know—but why



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waste time, say I, talking about people who are mostly dead and gone, when we've got all these dear living ones to think of and work for? Ever since I came to Virginia, I've been wanting to drop in on you, but there hasn't been a minute. We've been kept stirring, General and I, to do all that our new—employer—there, it's out. What's the odds, so long as I've got my good man safe and sound out of that horrid prison, and we've no children to mind what we do for an honest living? Why, my own brother, who was on Bartley's staff, is at this minute a street-car conductor in Baltimore, till he can find a better job. It was hard work to get through all that we had laid out at the Manor to be finished before Christmas. Don't look alarmed, my dear; there's no change that you can see, not an atom. Only everything freshened up and polished and made strong, to last as long again. General took as great an interest in it as I, but what with poor workmen and delays, we simply couldn't get off to drive into town, till to-day, and I came right straight here, of course."

"It is good of you to have done so!" cried Mona, her eyes shining. "Nothing—at least hardly anything—could please me so much in these days, as hearing such pleasant news of our dear old home."

"Oh, yes, child, I understand! I've understood all along. But that wasn't what I came for, specially. Mind, you've got to be very sweet to me. I told General I simply couldn't rest till you and your father saw the Manor now it's spick and span. We drove down in the old carriage you left there, with a pair of strong horses that we are to have the use of. We are stopping

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overnight with a cousin of General's in Franklin Street, Mrs. Graceleigh, who says she just loves you as everybody does, and to-morrow, we want—we insist—that you shall go out with us for Christmas, and take this old hoary retainer of yours, who opened the door for me, on the box seat by the driver to look after your dear papa. Now, don't say 'No'; there is no earthly reason why you shouldn't. I have set my heart on it, and you must, *you must, you must!*"

Mona's answer was a burst of honest tears, that on the whole proved as effectual in explaining her view of the situation as generous Mrs. Beaton could have desired. The kind lady soothed her tenderly, lingering to talk until many subjects, genealogical and contemporaneous, had been touched upon, and the two felt that they had known each other for long years. When Mona found out her visitor's identity with the friend who, in October, had sent cheering news to them of Lancelot in Fort Delaware, a new link was added to their friendship. The warm-hearted, irrelevant little woman seemed to her an angel visitor. She did not dream of rejecting her proffered hospitality. And Mrs. Beaton when she tore herself away, was beaming with the double success of having secured her guests, and of not having betrayed who had inspired her action, nor what great surprise she held in store for their delectation.

A glorious, crisp Christmas eve, the sun shining so brilliantly as to dispel, before midday, the silvery veil of light snow that had fallen overnight, saw the ancient Manor carriage—an immortal vehicle with red plush

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cushions, and folding steps that shot out when the doors were opened—turn in at the well-remembered road through a splendid pine wood, and cross the bridge over the “crick.”

The day, the expedition, the congenial society of General Beaton, had combined to effect a reincarnation of the invalid. Mona's fear that she would fail in causing him to understand the nature of their visit, and their true relation to their hosts, was happily dissipated. Alexius had become again, for the nonce, the courtly man of the world, accepting easily what he would have given as easily, chatting with his old spirit, enlivening the long drive by a flood of recollections, stories, and droll jests touched with sarcasm. When his child would have taken cheer from these conditions, she perceived, with sudden blank dismay, that he ignored everything connected with the war, his losses and sorrows, and, more especially, the absence of Lancelot, whose name did not cross his lips. He had simply gone back ten or fifteen years to an epoch when his fortunes were at flood-tide.

As they entered the hall, Britannicus offering his arm for old Marse to lean upon, General and Mrs. Beaton, with nice feeling, made some pretense to stop behind, motioning to Mona to precede them with her father. The old man, noticing nothing of this, strode forward masterfully, his spare form gaining erectness, his dim eye gleaming with satisfaction. Stopping at the accustomed place to be rid of his coat and hat, he looked about him with approval.

“It must be owned that in all our Christmases,” he said, with a stronger note in his croaking voice, “we have

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never done the thing better than to-day. Monimia, my dear, since your mother is detained in town, you will stand by me to receive our guests." He walked to the great fireplace, and stood with his back to a pile of blazing logs, beckoning her to follow.

Mona knew not where to turn, but dared not disobey. The Beatons, and the old negro, ashen gray with apprehension, cautioned her by looks to let matters take their course.

As with trembling limbs she took her place at her father's side, it seemed to her, indeed, that the radiance of the firelight, and of the sun streaming through the large middle window upon the spiral stairs, the ruddy sheen of the mahogany of doors and furniture, the dark gleam of the polished floor, the myriad reflections from glass and brass under festoons of greenery, had combined, as never before, in a splendor of Christmas welcome. Nothing had changed its place, nothing was missing, and the great hall wore a look of brightness and admirable comfort unfamiliar to it for years. Mr. Carlyle, also, was transformed. It was as if this restoration of his forsaken home had distilled into the air some subtle essence of undying youth that was passing into his veins. Truly, to those who, half-terrified, half-encouraged, looked upon his face and form, he had parted with years of dreary age, and was born again to a new era of vigorous manhood. His chest inflated, his withered brown face curved into genial smiles, he advanced a few steps upon the rug, bowing to receive Mrs. Beaton.

"You are too good, my dear madam, to come to

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us," he said, cordially. "And the General, too. General, I take this kindly, and I bid you welcome on your first visit to Carlyle Manor. A nice old place, we think it; simple and unpretending, but always open to our friends. It was built by my father's grandfather in old Colony days, and I love every stick and stone of it. My boy, Harry, who's a bit of an antiquarian, can tell you some rather nice stories about our predecessors here—Where's Harry, Mona? He ought to have been downstairs. When the rest of our friends arrive, General, I reckon you'll find your bearings among them. We'll have a rubber to-night, while the young folks foot it in the reel, and I'll ask your verdict on my 1798 Madeira. Yes, a fine fire. We lay by special logs for it. Monimia, my child, you will show Mrs. Beaton to her chamber, and explain that your mother is indisposed—Britannicus, what are you standing there, making sheep's eyes at me, about? Don't you know your business better? Come, stir yourself, boy, and see what the gentlemen will drink."

"Jes' as soon as I get Marse into the Charmber, to rest hisself a little teeny weeny bit," plead the negro's coaxing and infinitely tender voice.

"Father, dear, won't you come with us?" besought Mona, slipping a round young arm through his.

"Mona, Britannicus, I'm astonished at the pair of ye," snarled the master, turning wrathfully upon the conspirators. But the thread of his monologue was broken. He faltered, could not resume it, and in the end suffered himself to be led away by them.

"General, that is just more than I can stand," cried

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Mrs. Beaton, honest tears running down her cheeks. "It is simply harrowing. And what if, while he is under this delusion, the poor man runs upon Mr. Lyndsay, which is more than likely, because Mr. Lyndsay certainly wishes to pay his respects to Mr. and Miss Carlyle before he leaves the Manor, and to explain to them how the place came into his hands. He thinks it would be fairer on all sides for them to fully understand. And if they only knew, as we do, what Mr. Lyndsay really is—all he has done to give them this Christmas surprise—but now——"

"Now, dear lady," said Lyndsay, coming in upon the perplexed guardians of his trust, "I have just seen my old friend Britannicus, who has explained the sad situation to me. From what he tells me, it would be a grave risk to attempt enlightening Mr. Carlyle now as to the real status of affairs. It is our plain duty to play into his hands, and while he remains here, let him believe that all is as of old. As a matter of fact, it is much easier for me, and"—looking at his watch—"it should not be long before we shall have some one here who has the best right to lift all responsibility from our shoulders."

"Take care. Here comes Mona!" said Mrs. Beaton, nervously. "I am sure she has already found out at least part of the truth."

The two men started back at the glowing, flying apparition that, at this juncture, burst in from the long corridor leading to her father's old bedroom in the wing. Mona, flushed, enchanting, impetuous, her whole grateful soul in her eyes, looking neither right nor left,

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ran straight to Lyndsay, taking his hand within her own, and speaking brokenly.

“It is you—you, who have planned this pleasure for us! You, who have lifted up the old house out of its dust and cobwebs to look as it does—you, who are the real owner of the Manor—Ah, thank God, thank God!”

Lyndsay, blushing furiously, looked thoroughly ill at ease. But he need not have feared spectators of the little scene, since the General and his wife had already disappeared, like partridges on the approach of mankind near their haunts, leaving not a trace behind. And while Mona's grateful eyes turned their witchery upon his, and the couple stood alone in a stream of sunshine that seemed to bid all sorrow flee away, their young hearts attuned to hope and happiness, he felt the blood course like a mill-race through his veins. What could life do more for him than allow him to restore to her this beloved home and heritage? Since he had been laboring with the Beatons to bring about the completion of the house in time to give Mona a glimpse of her old-time Christmas happiness, he had grown to love and cherish the Manor as its earlier owners had done. To restore things to their exact former footing had given him more delight than any other expenditure made since he had come into his inheritance. And that Mona, instantly, graciously, without asking words or explanations, had understood this, and felt with him in the recesses of his heart, was the fullest reward he could have asked.

So for a mad moment he remained clasping her hand, noting with rapture the ceasing of her tears, her

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joy in the recognition of his generous toil, above all, her perfect trust of him—and then the brief splendor faded, and Lyndsay dropped Mona's hand with a sudden fierce gesture of renunciation.

"What is it—you are angry—offended?" she asked, pitifully. "What have I done? Surely this hallucination of my poor father——?"

"Never, never that!" he cried, putting the width of the great fireplace between them. "I want to say to you here, once for all, that I did not intend to obtrude myself upon your family reunion this Christmas. The house and everything in it is yours while you choose to occupy it. Mr. Carlyle is master here, absolutely. By to-night, I shall be in the train speeding northward—and by to-night, there will be one who——"

He interrupted himself, choked by an unpalatable morsel of remembrance. Whatever its nature, Mona would not allow him to indulge in long consideration of it.

"Then, if we are masters, and you a visitor," she exclaimed joyously, "you will never in the world be allowed to turn your back upon Carlyle Manor on Christmas eve! Here you are, here you stay, Mr. Lyndsay—to go, to come, to sit and mope alone, if you like, never to be bothered by talking to any one who bores you—as at present," she added, with a swift feminine shaft. "But leave us, now? Impossible! There are fifty things I want to show you, and after my father has had his nap, Britannicus thinks he will be quite himself once more. Oh! you won't go, say you



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won't go—you couldn't treat us like that, now, could you, Mr. Lyndsay? ”

He certainly could not resist the pretty coaxing of her voice and eyes. For a moment, he put aside the mooted question, suffering himself to be decoyed out-of-doors by her for a long exhilarating ramble around the place, and in the woods, where they roamed like happy children reckless of results. What endless pleasure for her to investigate, under his guidance, the repopulated stables, chicken-yard, and kennels, and the Servants' Quarter, in which General Beaton had succeeded in placing a few respectable old-timers of the Carlyle estate, supplemented by two families of his own ex-slaves, glad to follow him on any terms that promised an opportunity for continuing loyalty and service. And while Mona and Lyndsay were tracing out a wood path beneath the pines, what a glad surprise to her to espy afar off, lumbering along the avenue, an antique illuminated omnibus of the fashion in vogue in Richmond long years ago, drawn by mules, and containing sundry stores and dainties, under custody of old black Phœbe in a new and modish hat, with, best of all, Mona's own Mammy Clarissa, decently cowed in a thick, old-time woolen hood, sniffing with scorn at her sister-in-law's youthful head-gear.

To have Mammy Clary share her joy was the crowning touch, and Mona could hardly refrain from bursting from her greenwood covert with a cry of childish welcome. But at a pleading look from Lyndsay, she let the convoy pass by unchallenged to the “Gret Hus.”

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"I'm afraid I'm selfish," the young man explained, "but, somehow, it's borne in on me that this is to be my last one little hour with you uninterrupted."

"Who's to interrupt us?" she said, with a quick sigh. "In old days, Harry might have called me off, or Lance—oh! poor Lance, he is my drop of bitter in the sweetest cup I have tasted for many a long month. When I think of him, my dear, brave, patient cousin, I am ashamed to be happy. I would give all this up without a pang if he could have it in my stead."

"Some day he will enjoy it with you," said the young man, unsteadily. Mona blushed, but made no reply. For the remainder of their walk, a chill seemed to have come between them. Mona seemed dreamy, and Lyndsay ill at ease.

The short afternoon was closing into dusk when the two young people finally retraced their steps to the house, entering it to find the fire in the hall reenforced by a huge pile of fresh logs; Mrs. Beaton, in her best gray silk, seated with her knitting to one side of it; an Angora cat, and a couple of beautiful hounds dozing on the rug; the General, on his feet at a side-table, mixing a mint-julep; and, over all, an air of home comfort such as warmed the girl's sensitive heart. They tarried there a while to talk of the pleasant changes, then separated, Mona and Lyndsay to dress for a dinner to be served at six o'clock. Lyndsay came back for a moment to explain to the Beatons that, contrary to his intentions, he had promised Miss Carlyle to remain over the next day; and he and the General exchanged a few confidential sentences upon another topic, going out to-

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gether to listen upon the door-step for sounds that evidently failed to strike their expectant ears.

"It can be only a delay," said the General, with assurance, as they came in again from the delicious frosty air. "I have arranged with Britannicus to have his seat placed at table, and if the worst comes to the worst, he will surely join us later. Pity for your glorious plan to miscarry in the smallest particular, Lyndsay, but I feel confident the powers above are looking out for it and you."

And soon, the little home party, supplemented by a few neighbors, war-worn but invincibly cheerful, in shabby clothes, with soft slow voices and perfect adaptability to their surroundings, had gathered around the great table in the oak-paneled dining-room. The old pictures and portraits once covering the walls, removed to Richmond for safe-keeping early in the hostilities, had been replaced by a series of ancient prints from Boydell's Shakespeare, that in their black-and-gold frames presented a brave showing under the holly and mistletoe. Mrs. Beaton had insisted that Mona should take her mother's old seat at table, and the girl, assenting reluctantly, faced her father, who, refreshed and animated, but still, alas! without a trace of recollection of his true position in the house, had suffered Britannicus to lead him to his own arm-chair of carven mahogany. His meeting with Lyndsay had been bridged by Mr. Carlyle's complete unconsciousness that they two had met before. He greeted the young man with high-flown courtesy, assuming to include him among a party of their neighbors, and politely installed him at table

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next to a pretty girl in Swiss muslin with a camelia in her smooth hair, whose incessant, animated chatter happily made up for any deficiency in the conversation of her comrade.

Mona hardly dared look at Lyndsay. She felt guilty and ill at ease. But, from time to time, she met a glance from his blue eyes that bade her take courage and act her part unflinchingly. She knew that the arrangement at table was believed by their guests to be a kind act on the Beatons' part toward the broken old man who, in all likelihood, would never again preside in the home of his fathers. The identity of the modest young Lyndsay with the unknown Northern owner of the plantation was not suspected among the company, by whom he was generally supposed to be an agent acting in behalf of the absent Mr. Sharpless.

As the meal progressed, Lyndsay and the Beatons casting many an anxious, secret glance toward the door, the whole company came gradually under the famous old-time spell of Alexius Carlyle's personality as a host. With quips and cranks of acrid wit, tempered by the consideration of a genuinely hospitable soul toward honored guests, with gay stories and flooding reminiscence, the old man took and held easily the center of all interest. Although it was impossible for his hearers not to notice that in his field of discourse he ignored later years, they attributed this to an unwillingness to sadden the occasion by reference to his cruel losses and changed life. Borne upon the current of his brilliant talk, they laughed with him, applauding. Mona, who began to feel afraid, questioned with her eyes the old servant

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behind her father's chair, and read in his answering gaze a like apprehension that further chilled her heart. But both saw it was, by now, impossible to stem the tide, unless through some rude and sudden break, and she was beginning to long for the meal to end at any cost, when a servant, opening the door leading from the hall, hurried in, with a whisper for General Beaton's ear.

"What is it, General?" asked Alexius, a trifle tart at this interruption to a story then engaging listeners.

General Beaton rose at once upon his feet.

"I have the honor, sir, to ask you to receive another guest," he said, a happy smile breaking down his attempt at formal speech.

"Of course, of course; ask him to come in. Go, Britannicus, and say that we are at table, or I should wait upon the gentleman myself. Any friend of General Beaton's——"

"A friend of yours, sir," went on the General, "one whom I dare believe will be nearer to your heart than any other man who could join you this Christmas eve."

The old man also rose. A dull flush came into his face. His deep-set eyes questioned Beaton with pitiful eagerness.

"You don't mean it is Harry?" he stammered, in a strange unearthly voice. "Why, the lad wrote me they'd forbidden him a furlough. Lee told all the boys, including his own son, that they mustn't ask for one this year."

In the little thrill of sympathy that ran around the board, Mona left her chair and flew to her father's side.

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Something had told her what was about to happen, and she dreaded, while she rejoiced.

As with tender, filial words she broke to Mr. Carlyle the dear reality in store for him, she was thrust away impatiently, while he stood aquiver with tense excitement.

"Lance here? Lance? What brings him, when they wouldn't let Harry come?" he repeated, querulously; and then, at a second opening of the door, a tall, vigorous young man in citizens' clothes, with keen dark eyes and vivid coloring, his face radiating joy, came among them, and before greeting Mona, clasped the old man in his arms.

At that, what a glad chorus of welcomes, congratulations, wonderment, was bestowed upon the wanderer! Lance was as if caught up in a fiery chariot of love and welcome. Surrounded, pressed upon, lionized by his old friends and neighbors, he was the center of cordial words and tender thoughts. Men laughed, women cried openly, no one could do or say enough to welcome this last spar floated safely ashore from the wreck of their dear Lost Cause.

Lyndsay, of all the joyous throng, felt alone, awkward, and out of place. He was shrinking into the background, about to withdraw from the room, when Lance, going to him impetuously, drew him forward toward Mr. Carlyle, who had dropped exhausted into his chair.

"Here is the real author of my good luck, Cousin Alexius," he cried. "But for him, I'd have still been in quod for Christmas. It is he who has planned and

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carried out my getting here in time, and I'll take this occasion to say he's about the best fellow living, and the one worthiest to stand at the Manor in your shoes. And I want everybody present to know Mr. Lyndsay is the owner of Carlyle Manor now, in place of his uncle who bought the property—I'm told by my friend Beaton that he's been letting you think him the agent instead of the proprietor. Don't back out, Lyndsay, man. Shake hands with my cousin instead, and let him thank you for our family, for all the obligations we never can repay."

While Lance spoke, all present were struck with the dread change that came over the face of Alexius Carlyle. He had clasped Lyndsay's hand, speaking a few courteous words in obedience to his kinsman's request. Then, the old man, curiously shrunken and shriveled, yet wearing a look of sad intelligence previously missing from his eyes, pulled himself painfully up by the table, and stood in a commanding attitude, holding his wine-glass in his hand.

There was a hush that none dared interrupt.

"My friends," said a feeble voice, coming as if from far away, "I have had many emotions to bear to-night, and I am not very strong. I have lost my dear wife and my beloved son, and am here in my birthplace and that of my father's father's, as a stranger dependent upon the forbearing hospitality of its owner—Mr. Lyndsay, to whom we are all indebted for this—this—very happy occasion. I am old and broken with sorrows as you see, and there is little to make life worth living for me, except the hope of the happiness of those who are

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to follow me. I want you all to know the especial delight the return of this dear one, who was lost and is found again, has brought to me—not in himself only, because he is the head of our house, the last of our line, and is to be the prop of my old age—but because between him and me there is soon to be a nearer, dearer tie. Lance, my dear son, come to me. Mona, my daughter, let me take your hand. Now, friends and neighbors, glasses all! To the health of the happy pair!”

In the same strained silence, they drank the toast proposed. While Lance stood with Mona’s cold fingers in his clasp, and as troubled eyes watched Mr. Carlyle in fear of what might be yet to come, Alexius swayed and fell. Lyndsay, who was back of him, was first to catch the thin figure in his arms, transferring it to those of Lance and old Britannicus.

They carried the dying man into the chamber where he had first seen light, and there, without further consciousness, “he ceased upon the midnight, without pain.”



### XIII

**I**N the interval before Mr. Carlyle's funeral, Lyndsay returned to Richmond, earnestly beseeching Lance to consider himself owner of the Manor until the last sad ceremonies were over, and Mrs. Beaton could convey Mona back to the house in town.

Lancelot accepted the offer as graciously as it was made. All that Lyndsay, with a delicacy so true and a sentiment so fine, had done for the family, culminating in a pressure so brought to bear upon Lancelot's affairs, that the prisoner was set free in time for the Christmas gathering, had stirred the full fountain of gratitude.

For, following his visit with Cecil Dare and Madame de Chercroix to the fortress, Lyndsay had obtained permission to see Carlyle several times on his own account. A new delay in the order for release had necessitated strenuous work from the prisoner's friends, and to this service, backed by powerful influence, Lyndsay had devoted his best powers. The meetings, under such conditions, between the two men, had resulted in the foundation of a friendship destined to endure, Lance responding with the enthusiasm of his ardent nature to the young Northerner's shy but steadfast overtures. And when, at last, with joy and hope bubbling in his heart, Carlyle

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had stood a free man outside his fortress prison—leaving it with the good-will and outspoken kind wishes of his late jailers, the world before him where to choose—it was Lyndsay's aid that he felt to have been most potent in restoring him to liberty.

Of Cecil Dare's share in the enterprise, he had resolved to think as little as he could. The pain he had given her in return for her generous devotion was still unbearably acute. It was only forced forgetting that would ever heal that smart.

He had heard from Cecil only once again. From Lyndsay he had ascertained that she had been engaged by Madame de Chercroix to go abroad with her as paid companion. The exodus of all people of both sections of the States, who could afford to get to Europe, had already begun, and was to continue, until the French capital should become the universal haven of war-worn pilgrims, and be filled to overflowing with the patriots concerning whom the gentle Autocrat tossed off his famous saying: "Good Americans, when they die, go to Paris."

Thither, in the late autumn, the two ladies had taken their flight, and Lance felt that things were better so. He was sure that Cecil cherished a vague, sad hope of somehow becoming reconciled to her unworthy mother, whose relations to her child he now clearly understood; since, upon leaving America, the girl had put into Lyndsay's hands, for Lance, a written statement of her motives in the drama of the night at Foxcroft, beseeching Colonel Carlyle to use this, in case necessity should ever compel a fuller explanation of his own share

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in it. The paper, duly transmitted, had been read by Lance with eager interest and sympathy. Resolved never to help himself by inculcating her, he had consigned it to destruction.

The story of fateful episode was nearly what he had supposed. She had come back to Virginia after her long sojourn with the good Sisters in New Orleans, upon an imperious summons from her mother to join her and sail for Europe. The notorious part Molly Ball had taken in the war, the evil repute of her scapegrace brother, had been kept by the nuns from Cecil. She was surprised at the strange rude fashion in which she found her family camping out in secret, in the old barracks of a house the Dares had forsaken at the outbreak of the war, and dismayed by the change in her mother, still slender and comely as a girl, but hard and reckless in speech and manner, with the red seam of a bullet wound upon her cheek. Far worse, the sad reality that Cecil's old idol, Selden, was now a reckless, hopeless sot!

Then, the queer people who visited them, always under shadow of the night, the mystery that hung around her mother's and Selden's nocturnal disappearances from home!

It was not long, however, that the poor girl was kept in doubt as to what black scheme Mrs. Dare was plotting, to be covered by a quick retreat from her native land.

From Selden, in his cups—the weak, dissolute brother who still loved her in his way—Cecil, one night, learned dreadful truths: that her mother, the dauntless Molly Ball of the Confederacy, was now leader and director of

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a plot against the heads of Government, shortly to be launched like a thunderbolt; and that the meetings of the conspirators would terminate, the day following, with the distribution of certain papers of instruction then hidden at Foxcroft, among a band of desperate men, survivors of a struggle in which they had had no honorable part.

With all Cecil's gallant soul, she despised such crime, its methods and its instruments. To prevent the threatened catastrophe and to save her mother and brother from the consequences of their evil-doing, she nerved herself to do what had so nearly ended in grimmest tragedy.

And when after accomplishing her work—at such a cost to Lancelot Carlyle—she had guided Starlight, Molly Ball's favorite mount in many a desperate ride during the war, safely home, and had turned the mare into her stable, she did not further swerve from going directly to her mother's room to arouse the sleeping woman and confess what she had done.

What followed was not written in the statement submitted to Lancelot Carlyle. It was inscribed indelibly upon the memory of Cecil Dare, who, for the first time in her life, saw her terrible mother as she was. The same day, Mrs. Dare and her son abandoned Cecil and the country, leaving no trace of their movements, and but a scant supply of money for Cecil's maintenance. Then had come to the girl the crushing tidings of Lancelot's arrest.

With the aid of an old negro woman, Cecil had shut up the house and removed to Washington, where, during

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the long dreary summer, friends had arisen at her need. Nothing that any one could do could have rid her of the burden she carried, of yearning love and tenderness for the man she had so injured.

Because the reading of this narrative had warmed Lance's heart and quickened his pulse to fever heat, he had all the more steadfastly resolved to put Cecil out of mind. He thought he was glad at hearing she had left America. God helping him, when he next met the girl, it would be without fear of disloyalty to his promised wife.

Now, since his return to home and former ties, nothing remained in him, he hoped, but the love Mona merited, a love new-plighted by her father's dying hand. He had come out of prison feeling like an eagle about to take his flight in ether. All things seemed possible to his bursting youth and strength. What though Mona and he began their new life poor as the poorest? He would take her to his heart, and together they would challenge adverse Fate. She was the flower left blooming at his feet, when her father had fallen like an oak-tree crushed to earth.

But Mona had sorrows of her own to wrestle with, and for many days after the funeral she lay broken and exhausted in her old room at the Manor, unable to bear the removal to town, and tended continually by Mrs. Beaton and Mammy Clarissa. Lyndsay, who felt that he could not with propriety intrude upon the family at this time, went back sorrowfully to Airedale.

Lance, distracted by new anxiety, moved back and

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forth between Richmond and the Manor, finding more than enough to occupy him, in town, in overlooking and settling the involved affairs of the estate. With troubled Mr. Chester, he deplored the quixotic spirit that had led Alexius to give up all hold upon the purchase-money paid by Mr. Sharpless for the place. For, besides the town house, which she must now sell or let, there was barely a pittance left for Mona's support. That Lance should at once marry his cousin and take her to Foxcroft to resume his experiment in farming, interrupted by disaster, presented itself to his judgment—and Mr. Chester's—as the only solution of their difficulty!

While Mona was convalescing, he broached this idea to Mrs. Beaton and was disagreeably surprised by a certain blank look in the matron's kindly face, which she promptly made an effort to supersede by one of sympathy for him.

The same day, the loving, tormented, hypocritical lady, unknown to her husband, slipped into the post-bag a long letter addressed to Airedale, in Massachusetts.

Mrs. Beaton, between affection for Lancelot and Mona, and loyalty to her employer, Lyndsay, whom she had adopted into her big heart as its ruler second only to the General, was, indeed, greatly put about. From the girl's half-conscious talk in illness, she had gathered enough to show how far from ready was Mona to fulfil the troth-plight with her cousin, renewed by her father in the last solemn moments of his life. And when, additionally, certain impressions gathered from her talks with Cecil Dare about Lancelot during the long hours of their sojourn at the boarding-house in Wash-

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ington, swarmed, forcing themselves upon her memory, poor Mrs. Beaton felt convinced that still another loving heart was doomed to wreck through the proposed marriage, and decided that the world was out of joint.

She ventured, unsuccessfully, to take the General into her confidence. He was all for the Carlyles, for the old Virginian idea of keeping together a family, and declared that this nonsense about Lyndsay did not matter really, and that a year or two after wedding with Lance, Mona would be as happy as a queen. "Lyndsay is a fine fellow," the good man went on to say; "a splendid fellow. His kind is the Roman of our future national history. Whatever field he goes into, he will carry to it great strength of character and persistence of effort. We shall hear of him in large matters, not as a mere money-spender among rich parvenus. But the time isn't ripe yet, to talk about a girl of Mona Carlyle's antecedents intermarrying with one of THEM. And for the peace of mind of all concerned, little lady, you'd better give it up!"

Mrs. Beaton blushed guiltily, remembering the letter to Massachusetts. The poor, lonely, overrich boy in his far Northern home, who had shown to her the warmth of a long-repressed filial instinct, could not be thrust aside like this, when she knew Mona was in love with him, and dear Cecil Dare, over yonder in France, somewhere, was ready and willing to console Lancelot!

While she was trembling in secret, but still rejoiced over her rash achievement in hinting at facts to Lyndsay, the bubble of Mrs. Beaton's sentimental hopes was pricked by his letter in return. A charming letter—a

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noble letter, she considered it, but definite in assuring her that he had withdrawn altogether from the field. He did not attempt to hide what he had felt for Mona. Rather was he relieved to pour it out in a rich, full stream upon sympathetic soil. But Lyndsay was not made of the yielding sort, where he considered principle to be involved, and the scene when Mona's poor, little cold hand had been laid in her cousin's, publicly, had been also the final chapter of his dream of her.

When, at last, Mona was well and strong enough to take the decision of her life into her own hands, Mrs. Beaton made her ready for a necessary talk with Lancelot, who had come out from town to spend a night at the Manor, and settle matters with his promised wife, before leaving for Foxcroft to look after his interests at the farm.

They had ensconced the fair invalid in the corner of a great carved sofa across one end of the fireplace in the hall where a fire of logs was burning cheerily, with a Chinese screen behind her to keep off drafts. The whole place was aglow with sunshine and the sparkle of those inanimate objects that so poignantly outlast the work of the great Creator's hand.

Mona and Lance sat facing each other, each with a strong resolve at heart, both willing to talk for a while of other things before broaching the subject uppermost in thought. They spoke tenderly of the recent dead, of their absent host, and of the strange circumstances that had brought the two together as Lyndsay's guests in Mona's former home. Then Lancelot, taking courage, told Mona the result of his investigation of her father's



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affairs, and of his own paucity of fortune. Truth to tell, he was a beggar come to her for alms, since there had been a fair offer to buy her house in town, which would put her in funds for the immediate future, while he must needs go back to poor old Foxcroft, in order to wring subsistence from the soil. "So you see, dear," he ended, smiling, "that when I ask if you'll marry me now, it is really a cheeky thing, since you'll be the moneyed member of the firm. But you need me to take care of you, and I need your love and help. It was your father's last wish for us—and I think we'd be doing right."

"To do right seems to me all that's worth while now," she answered, sadly. O Lance! why should I beat about the bush to find words to tell you something that weighs on me day and night? Try to help me by understanding what it is. If I married you now, just because I'd promised my dear father, there'd be always between us this thing that I never dreamed of until it came to me unsought. I have lain here for days, praying against it, fighting it, striving to crush it down, but I can't, I can't—dear Lance, indeed I can't!"

Lance looked at her in astonishment. He had never seen such fire in her eye, such a light upon her face. For the first time it flashed upon him what Lyndsay's unselfish service to him and to their household had meant. His first feeling was one of pain, and, despite him, some distaste. For a moment he could not find the smallest word to say.

"You're not vexed with me, Lance?" Mona plead, piteously. "I couldn't do anything but tell you, to be honest, could I? And feeling so, I couldn't do you the

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wrong of letting you take me to be your wife. No, no, I wouldn't dare. But I can fight it still, and I will. Some day I shall conquer, but till then—O brother—brother! can't you understand? ”

Her head dropped into hands that could not hide the crimson welling upon cheeks and brow. Lancelot sprang upon his feet, still silent, but with a certain great throb of relief in his overburdened heart. To regain control of himself he walked rapidly across the hall and stood looking out of the window into the rime-frosted woods. Had Mona answered as he had confidently believed she would do, he had meant to tell her of the woman who was her rival in his heart—the lovely vanished woman of whom he had heard never a word since she quitted America, whom he had resolved never to think of more. Now, his ideas were tumultuously thrown together and confused. One thing only was clear and unchangeable. Mona would have none of him as a lover. Her heart, unlike his, was not to be given elsewhere than into the keeping of its true owner. A sense of shame shot through him that, in this ordeal, her soul had risen above his.

She came over to join him at the window, slipping her hand within his arm, and he marveled to see how the woman in her had supplanted the child he had left behind. She plead with him to be forbearing of her weakness and never to speak of it again. Anything would be better than for them to fail now in full understanding of each other's lives and motives. They must hold together more closely than ever, he must share her means, present and future. And while, abashed and constrained, he let her talk on, she unfolded to him her

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cherished plan of starting, in her own home, a workroom for the dainty objects in brocade and silk, trifles she knew so well how to fashion, for which her market was already beginning to increase. She would associate with her in the venture another young girl of her acquaintance. Mammy Clarissa would watch over them, and they would soon make more than an equivalent for the price offered for the house. This thing, during her dear father's lifetime, had been impossible, but now——

“And O Lance, dear Lance, if only you forgive me and approve,” she ended, with a brightening face, “I believe we may both come to bless this hour when we had the courage to decide to live apart.”

It was like a woman, to put aside, so patiently, her own hopeless love, and be content to press forward to a life of industry in petty toil. Lance could not be so content. He acquiesced in her decision, the news of the rupture of their engagement was given out to their common friends, and after doing his utmost to serve Mona and help her upon her chosen way, he set out again for Foxcroft, reaching there to find the house, fired the night before by incendiaries, but a smoldering ruin, his barn and farm implements destroyed, and poor Jerry Trimble, his faithful henchman, lying crippled in the cabin of Mars and Disley, whose wits were almost gone through fright!

A month later, Lancelot Carlyle had joined in the procession of Fortune's swordsmen from the South, who at the close of the civil war circled the globe in their search for adventure. He served with distinction under

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divers flags before coming to a halt in Egypt, where the events of his remarkable career made a page in history apart from this chronicle, and lifted him, without delay, into the full light of contemporaneous favor with his adopted master, the Khedive, as with the public who looked on.

## XIV

**I**T seemed almost a nursery dream to Carlyle Bey in the full rich life that had come to him since he had settled down in Egypt, that remote fancy of his that he could have married his dear little stay-at-home cousin and gone to farming at poor Old Foxcroft. Never to have tasted experience like what had stirred his brain and kindled his imaginings since forsaking the dear, ruined South! Never to have known the East in his blood, to have lived in this human kaleidoscope?

He had kept in touch with home enough to know that Mona was "well and busy and cheerful, and succeeding in her business venture beyond their expectation." So Mrs. Beaton wrote and Mona confirmed. But it seemed so far away. He believed himself perfectly content. But now and then recollections smote him like a two-edged sword. At the mere thought of a girl standing before a dim mirror knotting above her head the weight of her red-gold tresses—or standing with her arm linked in his, facing the men who would have hanged her mother—or again, looking at him with sudden woe in her joyous eyes, from the far side of his prison-bars—the tough soldier would start and shiver like a horse coming into the presence of a bear.

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No, Cecil was not forgotten, although the habit of submission to keen disappointment had so mastered his life he believed himself resigned to have let her go out of it.

Following the break of his engagement with Mona, he had deemed it right to inform Cecil of the fact without asking for any answer. Later on, he had sent her a letter, pouring out his love and praying that she would let him come to her, no matter where, but to this also there was no response. He had thought himself cured of vain regret, when he came upon an American newspaper announcing the marriage of Madame de Chercroix, of New Orleans, with Colonel Richard Claxton, of Newport and New York. It was a revival of a boy-and-girl affair, the journal added, among the first of the "reconstruction matches," as they were called, and the couple had gone abroad to spend the winter in Paris.

Lance, who was just then expecting orders for a special mission in Paris from his master, the Khedive, felt a rush of quite unreasoning hope that he might run upon Cecil's former friend and patroness somewhere, and thus rend the veil of absolute silence surrounding the girl he loved. The same day, a man sitting at tea with him on the terrace at Shepherd's, happened to mention the odd story of an ex-Confederate spy—a pretty woman with a stirring history, who carried the mark of a Federal bullet—having been married by an old Frenchman of rank and wealth, wholly fascinated by her charms, and thus translated into the ranks of good society in Paris. Both the names of husband and wife had escaped the speaker, but Lance had a sudden wild

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idea that the heroine in question must be Cecil's mother, "Molly Ball"!

Perhaps Cecil, too, was married and safe in the shelter of a home. But he could not hope so, Heaven help him, no, not yet! The opportunity for satisfying his anxiety on these points came sooner than he had dared expect. He reached Paris in time to be present at one of the official receptions at the Tuileries, whose salons at that date were almost the only common social meeting ground possible to the ex-Confederates and their victors of the North. But it is to be feared that rancor, subdued by conventionality, animated the breasts of too many reunited Americans in gala attire who pressed together to pay their respects to Louis Napoleon and his beautiful Eugénie. The old Creole families of New Orleans, intermarried with and well rooted in the best world of France, gave the Confederate exiles various opportunities of asserting themselves in good society, independently of the offices of a minister of the United States.

A brilliant scene, that of a general reception by the sovereigns in the last flowery days of the Second Empire! As Carlyle Bey mounted the fifty steps of the grand staircase, at either end of which stood one of the Emperor's statuesque Cent Gardes, he was but little stirred by the theatrical splendor that surrounded him. He had been part of too many foreign pageants to find in them novelty or excitement; and as soon as he should have made his bow before their Majesties meant to go comfortably back to his hotel and smoke.

He did not pass unobserved. Even in this mixed

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congerie of races and nationalities, the tall, rather somber young man in the uniform of the Khedive's service obtained notice for his remarkably good looks and indifference to comment.

That he was no Oriental was plain to see, although the touch of olive in his complexion and the Southern languor of his eyes, that seemed at the outset of the evening to be weary of what they looked upon, dashed somewhat the suggestion of Anglo-Saxon origin.

Lance was quite unaware that the gaze of one beautiful woman in particular had followed and dwelt upon him with persistency. Nor did he observe that she was contriving with dexterity to steer her companion, a stately vieux moustache of a courtier wearing a red ribbon in his buttonhole, until the crush brought them close to Carlyle's side. He did not look at her, until it appeared that her lace had caught upon some portion of his accouterments, and they were actually bound together by its threads of gossamer. As he apologized, in form, he saw that the lady was no longer young, but lithe and graceful in her build, with black eyes of piercing luster, and satin black hair worn close to a small spirited head, beneath a coronet of magnificent rubies. Jewels flashed elsewhere about her person, and she trailed after her a robe of white velvet, as if disdaining to lift it from contact with the trampling of feet.

For an instant he met her gaze, and something about it knocked hard at the doors of his memory. He almost fancied that she was studying his face. Then, the costly lace still refusing to come away, she tore it with a vixenish gesture and a stamp of the small foot. As they



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parted and she bowed in answer to his farewell, he observed that her beauty was marred by a small but distinctly red cicatrix across one cheek.

The old gentleman who accompanied her laughed at her impatience in tearing the lace, but laughed indulgently. Some little time after the Khedive's envoy had paid his respects to the Emperor and Empress and was turning listlessly away, he heard his name spoken, to be further confronted by the personage whom he had seen conducting the heroine of the ruby diadem and uncertain temper.

"It seems that Carlyle Bey is an *Américain du Sud*," said the suave stranger, "and that Madame, *ma femme*, claims him as an old friend as well as a compatriot. I am hoping, therefore, that we may induce him to give us the pleasure of his company at supper at our hotel to-night, at any time after twelve. I am the Comte de Marbois, monsieur, and Fame has already introduced to me the distinguished soldier whom so many armies have been proud to inscribe upon their rolls of honor."

Decidedly, there was no resisting such courtesy, and Lance found himself, after a short talk, pledged to accept the Count's invitation. His attention diverted by other acquaintances, they parted before he had made the least approach toward discovering where he had known Madame la Comtesse. What Southern family of his acquaintance she had sprung from did not suggest itself. He was certain that he could never have liked her. An antipathy, long dormant, seemed to have been aroused into active life by her vicinity, and already

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Lance repented him that he had weakly yielded to the old Count's civility.

While thus meditating, he was addressed again by name. On a bench, near the principal stairs of exit, where she sat as if waiting for some one to rejoin her, he saw the handsome form and gracious countenance of the former Madame de Chercroix, now Mrs. Richard Claxton. She held out her hand to him, his face lost its cloud, and he greeted her with almost boyish warmth.

"I never supposed you would remember me," she said. "But you had been pointed out to us this evening, and my husband had just decided to go back and look you up, to ask you to dine with us to-morrow."

"One isn't likely to forget such hospitality as you once showed me in New Orleans, even if the last time you were good enough to try to 'look me up' at Fort Delaware was not a success. What you did then, Mrs. Claxton, for a ragged, bearded prisoner of war, put me under a debt of lasting gratitude, and I have often longed for an opportunity to meet and thank you in person. But first, my best congratulations upon your marriage. Claxton is—well, you know better than I do, what he is——"

"Truly I do, and on that point there is nothing more to say."

"He is associated in my thoughts with his visits long ago at the Manor—with the happiest time I ever spent in old Virginia—that is, almost the happiest time, for the four years of war had their compensations. May I sit on the end of your little bench till your husband returns?"

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"Please do, if I am not keeping you from something better. Of course, you won't refuse to come to us, at the apartment we've taken for our stay in Paris, but, in the meantime, this isn't half a bad moment to talk of certain things that overflow my thoughts when I look at you."

He winced, but met her gaze bravely, taking his place at her side upon the margin of crimson velvet left exposed by the soft overflow of her skirts of manifolded tulle.

"Unfortunately, I have but a few days in Paris, and must return as soon as my mission is accomplished. But whenever it is possible, I shall always rejoice to be your beneficiary."

"You told me that so charmingly in your letter after our momentous assault on Fort Delaware, I have felt well repaid. My efforts for you then, inspired by lovely Cecil Dare, and carried on in memory of our own early acquaintance, were my first and only experience in political wire-pulling, and I was on my mettle to succeed; and, after all, Mr. Lyndsay did the most. But for you to be freed and reach home, only for a tragedy, instead of the happy holiday we hoped for—that was very, very sad."

His brow clouded again for a moment, then cleared.

"At the time it cut deep. But the years are merciful, if few, and I have had so much since, I must regret nothing in the past."

The strains of a Strauss waltz floated to them from the adjoining *salle*. People came and went, some who knew the lady, hesitating, as if with a desire to make one

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of her always charmed circle, then passing on, smiling to see her absorption in the handsome stranger.

"We heard also of the burning of your home at Foxcroft," went on the lady, tentatively. "May one say what hard luck we thought it?"

He shrugged.

"That was the work of some miserable sneaks in my neighborhood, who professed to celebrate an *auto da fé* by smoking out the nest of a suspected conspirator. It happened, you know, shortly after my release from prison, and was the determining cause of my leaving America to be a soldier of fortune. So, perhaps, I ought to be glad. If I had found a shelter there things would have jogged along, I fancy. I'd have had enough to occupy my dull days on the place, bacon and fowls and corn-bread to keep alive on, old books to read, and—little more! The poor fellow I left in charge, bore the brunt of my calamity. He intercepted the masked raiders, fought them single-handed, and, when overcome, was lamed for life by the fall of a burning beam upon his foot. That's one more of my happy memories of home!"

Mrs. Claxton could not fathom the note of bitterness, so foreign to her former reading of his open and buoyant character.

During their talk so far, both had been skirting the edge of things that neither knew how to openly approach. The return of Mr. Claxton in search of his wife, his hearty pleasure in meeting with Lancelot, their animated chat concerning Mona, and other subjects of mutual interest, were a welcome diversion. The tactful lady felt that she needed time to understand the way the

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land lay. Before they parted, she had engaged Carlyle to dine with them next day, and it was not until the moment of seeing the pair about to descend the staircase to their carriage, that Lance bethought him to consult Claxton as to the odd invitation forced upon him to sup with the Count and Countess de Marbois.

The effect was so sudden as to seem electrical. Claxton looked at his wife, his wife looked at Claxton. Both made no attempt to conceal their embarrassment.

"You met her face to face? You had no suspicion who she was?" finally asked Claxton.

"Nothing but vague and far-away remembrance, and a very decided sense that I wanted to see no more of her."

"My dear fellow, what I shall tell you is only what is everywhere whispered in this seething whirlpool of mixed American society around us. Many of your Southerners, here, deny the various charges against her, and extol her as a representative *grande dame* of ancient Virginian lineage. But we happen to know better. This Countess de Marbois, whose husband, a rich, amiable old *boulevardier* who knows nothing and cares less about what has happened in the wide remote America, is none other than your famous spy-woman, the notorious Molly Ball, and the mother of Cecil Dare."

"Richard!" interposed his wife, as Carlyle drew a long, hard breath.

"Nonsense, dear, why should we try to protect her? There are too many make-believes afloat in Paris now. I have no patience with the fools who accept them without protest. I consider this one a scandal to society, and

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Carlyle Bey, of all people, has certainly no reason to treat her with consideration."

"Can it be possible that Miss Dare is living with her now?" asked Lancelot, trying to recover his equanimity.

"No; but that is too long and sad a story to tell, here," answered the lady. "When my poor dear Cecil left me in Paris, to rejoin her mother, I felt sure that the arrangement would not last. Then circumstances—not to the mother's credit—forced Cecil to separate altogether from Mrs. Dare, and she went away . . . even from me . . . hid herself utterly, foolish girl. I have actually no idea where to find her . . . but she writes me from time to time to say she is well."

"Has she means sufficient for her support?" asked Lance, tortured at the idea of the proud wounded creature concealing her identity from those who loved and would shelter her, and perhaps in poverty.

"Oh! that's the only bright spot in the situation. Through the cleverness of Mr. Lyndsay, apparently the good genius of every one in whom he takes interest, it was discovered that some real estate out West, bequeathed to Cecil by her father's will, was of good and growing value. Lyndsay had found out about it in some of his own explorations into his queer uncle's many purchases of land and building lots. He managed the sale of it for Cecil as soon as she came of age, and I'm afraid that was chiefly the reason of Mrs. Dare's sudden desire to have her child again under her wing——"

"My dear, I don't want to hurry you, but you are overtired, and our carriage is waiting," said Claxton,

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interrupting. "To-morrow evening, you and Carlyle Bey may talk of these interesting matters to your hearts' content. My wife thinks I am not always sympathetic, Carlyle, about her *rara avis*, Cecil Dare, but charming as the girl is, one can never forget she's the daughter of Molly Ball."

Lance accompanied his friends down the staircase, heard "Les gens de Monsieur le Colonel Claxton!" called by the waiting lackeys, in a succession of stentorian roars, and saw the newly married pair drive away between two lines of mounted guards, amid bonfires kindled in the frozen streets, to keep warm the outside attendants of the Emperor's festival. Then, ordering his own carriage, Carlyle Bey returned to his hotel, to pen and send off a polite excuse for his non-appearance at the little supper of the Countess de Marbois.

Far into the night he pondered. The years rolled back like an unfolded scroll. The meeting with kind Mrs. Claxton, tidings, however unsatisfactory, concerning Cecil, and, above all, his astonishing encounter with Mrs. Dare, the original source of his long exile from home and friends, had effectually banished sleep. That woman! His amazement at her presumption in accosting him was exceeded by his stupor of surprise in finding her so transformed. The spectacle of Molly Ball wearing the ancestral coronet of an authenticated aristocracy, asserting herself as a real great lady at a dubious court, was, of all the suites of war within his ken, the most remarkable!

Her motive in trying to bring him into her acquaint-

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ance was unfathomable. For escaping the snare, he had to thank Fortune and the late Madame de Chercroix. But Cecil—where and how should he find her? For he must.

The Claxtons' little dinner of three went far toward dispelling the vapors engendered by Lancelot's vigil of overnight. While the meal progressed, Carlyle was continually wondering why a pair so well assorted as his hosts had been kept apart so long. The dominant impression conveyed by their marriage was that of harmony and loving interdependence.

Coffee had hardly been served, when Claxton, asking to be excused to write letters for the American mail, took himself off into his own sanctum, leaving his wife and Carlyle together in the *salon*. Mrs. Claxton, who had seen that her guest was unusually distrait and perturbed, wondered whether it would not have been better for Dick to stand by her during the talk that must ensue. Her apprehension was dissipated by the young Virginian's first words when they were left alone.

"I wonder if I may tell you"—he began, disconnectedly—"I have been longing to tell both of you, but dared not—of a most extraordinary experience that befell me, just before coming here to-night?"

"Let me guess," she answered. "It has something to do with the dashing lady whom poor old infatuated Marbois has put at the head of his fine establishment?"

"You are quite right. Nothing more nor less than a visit from her, at my hotel—an astonishing visit. You



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might have thought her a saddened and noble wreck of the Southern cause—an exiled patriot, full of lofty sentiments and ideals. Really, she almost persuaded me to think myself a callous and unrelenting villain, thirsting for unworthy revenge.”

“I can quite understand her success in imposing upon you,” said Mrs. Claxton, a little haughty chill coming into her voice, “even though I have not the advantage of ever having consented to meet the Countess de Marbois.”

“She upbraided me with the unkindness of my refusal to allow her to hold out the olive branch of peace between us—professed to have been overwhelmed with regret that her patriotic action should have had such ultimate consequence to me—said I was the last person in her thoughts when she had made use of my house in her country’s service—her country’s service, good Lord, and she just escaping with her neck! But I forget—you can not know——”

“Would it help you to know that Cecil Dare, my brave dear Cecil, who gave me up for a reason connected with this person of whom we speak, and has kept away through shame of the connection—once told me the whole story of her meeting with you that night at Foxcroft?”

“Thank Heaven! Then I can rid my mind by free speech at last. Understand me, Mrs. Claxton, I have never been a harsh judge of the young lady’s share in that lamentable adventure——”

“Oh! I am sure of that,” interrupted his hostess, warmly. “Cecil, poor darling, made me realize that you

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had been only too good and forgiving, then and afterward."

She stopped, and bit her lip. She remembered that she was there to listen, not to confide.

"But I can only despise the mother, as a detestable reminder of the most poignant trial of my life; to have her breathe the same air with me is an offense, and I believe, even now, she has some design upon my peace. It appears she has kept *au courant* of my movements in the world——"

"Most of us have," said Mrs. Claxton, politely. "You have really had all the glory one man deserves."

"You are always kinder than I deserve," the man answered, becomingly modest. "The Countess de Marbois owned that she has been 'looking out for me' to arrive in Paris. Her husband—Heaven save the mark!—is 'longing' to make my acquaintance. She ended in a flood of cordial reminiscences of my cousin Julian Carlyle, who, in the old days only endured her for her good husband's sake, and cautioned me, as a boy, against ever falling in love with any 'half-breed', for her pretty face, and she adjured me to come to her house to-morrow evening, to meet 'a few of the faithful,' who will unite in lamentations over our fallen hopes. What am I to think?"

"That is a part of her present pose," said Mrs. Claxton, the vexed color rising into her face. "I agree with you in thinking her overture hides some special intention. I should forewarn you, however, that I am really no competent critic of the Countess de Marbois, since

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toward me she cherishes the most violent form of feminine antagonism, partly through jealousy of Cecil, but mainly because I have repeatedly declined to let any one present her to my acquaintance."

"Do you think it not possible her daughter might be with her now?"

"I think not. I will tell you all I know. Some of it, perhaps, never came under your consideration. For a time following the war, Mrs. Dare, handsome, showy in a cheap way, audacious, was floating through the Southern Colony in Paris, living, no one knew how, sometimes in funds, again miserably shabby, eager for every lift in a cab, or a theater ticket given by some compassionate acquaintance. Cecil, who was still with me, never saw her except by accident, yet I know the girl was in the habit of sharing what salary she got from me with her mother. Then, as I told you, our friend, Donald Lyndsay, who had undertaken to look up Cecil's claim to those city lots in Chicago coming to her by her father's will, reported that surprising piece of good luck for my dear girl. The property had increased substantially in value, and Lyndsay's judicious management since, has made of Cecil a little heiress, as such things go."

"I am most truly glad for her," he said.

"But wait—the moment this news got about among the hand-to-mouth people Mrs. Dare knew—flotsam of the war, professors of patriotism, not patriots—Cecil began to receive tremendous and moving overtures toward reconciliation, from her mother. She admitted to me woful happenings to her brother Selden, who was writing from Mexico for money, and whom his mother could no

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longer help. Between them, the worthless pair managed to witch away from generous Cecil a large sum. Finally, there came a crisis in Mrs. Dare's affairs. She represented herself to Cecil as on the verge of making a good marriage could some sort of income be assured, in order to keep up her fiction of being a Virginian aristocrat receiving *rentes* from her estates. Cecil promptly wrote to America for another large amount of money, which she distinctly never spent upon herself. Next came to us the astounding announcement of the Dare woman's actual marriage with the old Comte de Marbois. They had started upon a wedding journey to Italy, at the conclusion of which Cecil was expected to live with them permanently. At this juncture, just when melted by the thought of her mother's return to respectability and prosperity, the poor child found out a feature of Mrs. Dare's recent life that filled her with shame and misery. What had been fear and dread, was now made certainty. The money last wrung from Cecil had been used by her mother to buy the silence of a needy and unscrupulous lover, who had not delayed under threats of making their past relation known to the Comte de Marbois, to apply to her child for more."

Lancelot uttered an exclamation of disgust.

"One can understand how this knowledge affected Cecil and made her shrink from her former friends, feeling herself beyond the pale of respectable associates. . . . God knows how gladly I would have sheltered her!"

"That, then, was why she failed to answer my letter, asking her to be my wife?"

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"I fancy so. It was, as you remember, sent to my care and was certainly delivered to her. I would not have ventured to speak of this unless you had led the way. Forgive me, if I go too far—but, as long ago as our visit to Fort Delaware, I could not help seeing what you had grown to be to my poor darling Cecil. You, thus, were again a sacrifice to that intolerable pretender, Molly Ball."

"You think so?"

Lancelot had never thought to loosen the flood-gates of his love, as he did, upon this hint. Mrs. Claxton listened patiently, eagerly. She agreed with him that he must leave no stone unturned to find Cecil's whereabouts.

The remainder of his stay in Paris was spent in a futile search for the lady of his love, and when compelled to return dejectedly to his post in Egypt, he left the matter in charge of an elderly ex-Confederate officer, whose zeal in the service of a friend was aided by a venerated sentiment for a Southern woman in distress, that age could not wither nor custom stale.

A month later, Carlyle Bey, standing on the terrace at Shepherd's with a group of friends, opened a letter from his *chargé d'affaires* in Paris, only to find, to his disappointment, that Miss Dare, actually traced to a residence in Tours, had given up her abode in that place, and returned to Paris, where all trace of her was lost. Several weeks dragged by, and letters exchanged by Mrs. Claxton and himself speculated sadly upon the delay in their common hope; when, out of a clear sky,

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came one morning to Carlyle a missive from the Countess de Marbois. He read, with varying sentiments, the tidings it conveyed, and in the next few days, obtaining a special leave, sailed from Alexandria to Marseilles, and from thence took a *train rapide* to Paris.

## XV

**M**Y Cecil! My own, proud, foolish, wilful creature!" Mrs. Claxton was saying, while, over and again, she stroked the bright head lying in her lap, setting to rights, with loving touches, the errant tendrils of its ruddy locks, and occasionally dinting, with her finger-tip, the cheek beneath, for the sheer pleasure of seeing its roseate surface give into tender pink, then resume full radiance of bloom.

"How could you have kept away from me? Why did you doubt my love and forbearance at a time when you sorely needed me? Ah, well! those are questions that answer themselves in the asking; but, dear child, I did not think it was in you to hold out so long against your best friends; and, indeed, I had flattered myself that you had learned not to do without me."

"Perhaps it was written that I was to make way for Colonel Claxton, and, viewed in that light, my disappearance has borne no ill results, I think. To know that you are so happy has been my own most constant source of rejoicing, and the day of your marriage in America was held by me as a sacred festival!"

"If you knew how I welcomed and treasured that

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lovely old lace that came on the eve of my wedding. It was so exactly like you, that lace, Cecil, that I did not in the least need the card which you had wrapped in the heavenly cobweb, to be sure of the giver. But you should not have thought of sending me anything so costly, you very extravagant child."

"You forget that I am a comparatively rich young female now," answered Cecil, "and with my simple ex-Confederate tastes, I hardly know how to spend the income that I have. But, in any case, I only 'picked up' that lace, in one of my rambles through Tours with Mademoiselle Rosine; and the little antiquity-shop that possessed it let it go really marvelously cheap."

"What a trump she is, your Mademoiselle Rosine! How lucky that you could annex so good a chaperon!"

"I discovered her in the boarding-house where I first took refuge, the *âme damnée* of a shrewish landlady, whose sister she happened to be. Apparently, nothing pleasant had ever before come into the poor old lady's life, and yet she always wore that look of angelic sweetness and content. When I carried her off to be my comrade in my wanderings in the South, finally returning to take a little flat in Tours, she was literally overjoyed, and could not believe the despotic sister had not a right to come and witch her away from me. It was nice for me to be able to make some one supremely happy. I, who was haunted by misery! And so, gradually, cheerfulness came back to me, and I took interest in the new, narrow life I lived. Then my mother found out where I was, and began writing me many letters. She even came there to see me, and begged and implored me to



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forget what was past, and go to live with her. But I could not, oh, I could not! The very fact of her husband believing in her, as he does, and admiring her so extravagantly, would have made me, knowing her secret, ashamed to face him every day. Besides, I had been for months a victim of insulting and humiliating visits and letters from that other man, who continued to persecute me for money. Finally, a month ago, he died miserably in a hospital, and I was free to come back to Paris. You will readily see why I kept away from here before."

"It has been cruelly hard for you, my poor dear," exclaimed Mrs. Claxton, shuddering. "Wouldn't it have been better to go home to America, and get the nuns in New Orleans to take you in?"

"I thought of that, certainly," answered Cecil. "But a sense that, through all, my mother was standing on the edge of a crater, and might at any moment be engulfed in sudden shame and want, kept me near her. She had told me that if her husband ever found out the facts of her previous life, he would not hesitate to cast her off. And then, for all her riches and grandeur, she has been kept continually on the rack of anxiety about Selden, whom she loves passionately, beyond any other living being. She also told me she had led the Comte to believe that her son was dead, rather than acknowledge his disreputable career. Now, poor Selden, hardly ever writes to her, and to me never, since I had to refuse his inordinate demands upon my purse. I believe he is in Mexico, where he volunteered under Juarez, but I actually know nothing. My brother has long been out

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of life for me. But, under the circumstances, I could not desert my mother utterly, you see."

Mrs. Claxton looked as if she would have spoken, but restrained herself, a cloud of sympathetic sorrow coming into her eyes.

"Yes, dear, I think I understand you. But let us talk of happier things. Of the clew I had that led me to your semi-rural Paradise. Of a certain knight of yours, who, nothing daunted because you failed to answer an important letter of his, has been exhausting every effort to put himself again in communication with you. Don't try to evade me, Cecil. You have had enough of this solitary, nomad life. Be done with your morbid thoughts and fears. Let your family take care of their own affairs, and do you surrender your will to the unusual but very possible being who has cherished you through adverse circumstances, whose dearest wish is to be reunited with you, and who, you may be interested to know, is in Paris at this moment!"

Cecil sprang electrically to her feet. A sudden glory came upon her face. Like a wild creature, freed from its cage to roam upon the limitless prairie, she paced up and down the waxed floor of her tiny *salon* with its stiff yellow curtains and chairs and sofas, its pots of camellias in bloom, its litter of books and writing materials, a slant of spring sunshine coming through the window opening upon the garden.

"Still, you ask me no questions?" said Mrs. Claxton, mockingly. "My dear child, there are limits to even a heroine's capacity for endurance and self-control. Be honest, confess that you and Lancelot Carlyle, alias

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Carlyle Bey of the Khedive's service, Lancelot, the *beau sabreur* of the Virginian cavalry, Lancelot, fascinating ex-prisoner of war, to whose relief a certain young woman sped on wings of love in Captain Fogg's fishing-boat, not so many years ago—are both only waiting Heaven's opportunity to admit that they adore each other, and can't remain apart an instant longer."

She caught herself in her banter. Cecil had grown very pale. Her eyes plead beseechingly.

"You can't mean," she said, trembling like a leaf, "that Colonel Carlyle expects to come to me?"

"I do mean just exactly that, my darling girl," answered the lady, sensibly convinced that of her kind of tidings the current could not flow too fast. "Carlyle Bey, who has been for months in search of you, had news of your whereabouts from a most unexpected source, and has journeyed over from Cairo to verify them. I have seen him only this morning. He begged me to come first, and is now impatiently waiting, at my house, to know whether it will please your highness to receive him here, or whether you had rather meet him at dinner with us this evening."

"I cannot receive him here—or anywhere," cried the girl, stormily. "It would be opening the old wound. Nothing has altered of the conditions that kept us apart. They have increased in humiliation for me, rather. I am not fit for your and his companionship. I want to live alone, as I have done, carrying in my heart the keen sense of shame for what I have cost him, until time wears it and me out, together. Oh! why couldn't he leave me as I was?"

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Mrs. Claxton, for all response, put her two hands on the girl's shoulders, looking her determinedly in the eyes.

"Cecil Dare, I am just ashamed of you!" she said, with matter-of-fact decisiveness. "After all you've made that poor boy suffer, you don't intend to trifle with this chance to set it straight?"

"I intend this, positively," answered Miss Dare with spirit. "I refuse to meet Colonel Carlyle, anywhere, on any terms, until he has heard and passed judgment upon the horrible circumstances of my mother's later life."

"If that is all," commented Mrs. Claxton, who had begun, inwardly, to feel a painful apprehension that the fatality of Molly Ball's existence was destined to block the way once more, and permanently, between poor Lance and the lady of his love, "you may set your mind at rest, since I have the best reasons for knowing that when Colonel Carlyle met the Comtesse de Marbois at a ball at the Tuileries, and refused an invitation to her house, he had already been put in possession of the knowledge that drove you finally out of your mother's life. He can have absolutely no illusions concerning that lady and her entanglements. But it is you, Cecil, that he doubts and fears for. He thinks you have forgotten him, have learned to love some one else. Just now, his feeling for you is like a flame newly fed. He is ready and eager to take you away from everything, yet fears to put it to the touch. My dearest Cecil, in a crisis like this somebody has to interpose common sense, and I intend to be that unthanked individual. If all the people in the world who are cursed with scandalous relatives retired from the world in

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consequence, and refused to inflict themselves upon the community, society would come to a full stop. Pray, who hasn't an intimate black sheep? Come, now, dear, if Colonel Carlyle, knowing all he knows of your mother, and having already suffered what she has inflicted on him, chooses to overlook that knowledge in your favor, be reasonable, accept him, and my belief is that you will never again be troubled by the Comtesse de Marbois."

"I will dine with you this evening, dear," said Cecil, after a moment of hesitation. "But I might as well be as frank with you as you are with me. It is true that Colonel Carlyle wrote to me, asking me to be his wife. In the abased condition of mind I was in at the time, I did not even answer him. I could not bring myself to admit to him the further degradation of my surroundings and antecedents. Also, I felt convinced that I had already brought upon him enough that he might regret. It was better to let him think I had grown cold, indifferent, anything rather than to run the risk of a meeting until my own feelings were in proper check."

"And that you are triumphantly sure is the case now?" pursued Mrs. Claxton, with some malice.

Poor Cecil colored again, fierily. Her wise friend, judging that enough had been said upon a certain subject, spent the rest of the morning in making acquaintance with Cecil's domicile, a flowery villa on the outskirts of town, over the boundary line of whose garden-wall the foliage of the Bois de Boulogne dripped in verdurous cascades; and also, with that paragon of companions, Mademoiselle Rosine, an old gentlewoman, deaf

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and meek, her angelic countenance framed in ripples of silvery hair, her soft eyes ever following Cecil's movements with wondering devotion.

Clearly, the girl was happy, in a way. So content, indeed, with peace after turmoil, calm after rude storm, that Mrs. Claxton half-sighed at the thought of disturbing her anew, even in the interest of the insistent young man whom she found with her husband at luncheon time, ready, upon her report of her mission to Neuilly, to fly like an arrow from the bow to try his luck as his own ambassador.

"If you are reasonable," Mrs. Claxton said to him, over the coffee cups, "you will wait until after you have accustomed her to your presence, before you speak of nearer, dearer things. She is still abnormally sensitive concerning her own position in your eyes. In my opinion, she is quite capable of another disappearance, for your benefit."

Lancelot looked alarmed.

"You cannot mean it?"

"And I did not dare own to her that the clue to her whereabouts had actually come to you through her mother."

"Of course, then, you had no opportunity of communicating the news of her brother's death?"

"No. And if I thought of it, I had not words to answer the questions she would have put me about the manner of the wretched young man's end."

"There is, unfortunately, no doubt that he was shot by sentence of a military court martial, and for serious

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offenses," said Lancelot gravely. "I have ascertained so much from a friend, who had heard of the execution of this renegade young Virginian through a letter from Mexico, which must have arrived in Paris at the time Madame de Marbois was informed of her son's death. What are you thinking of now, Mrs. Claxton? I see your face falling like a barometer."

"Only that Cecil must never know those facts, if it is humanly possible to keep them from her."

"You believe that this will be one more stone in the wall between us?" cried Lance mournfully.

"I won't say what I believe. But I almost wish Cecil Dare had never taken that midnight ride which ended in her making your acquaintance. You see, my dear friend, that, all things considered, it will be wiser not to go to her to-day. Meet her first quietly this evening, then let matters take their natural course."

"What do I hear my wife recommending to you, Colonel?" observed Richard Claxton, coming out to them, cigar in hand. "If she would ever put that doctrine into practise, life might be less animated, perhaps, but more calm, for her husband and her friends."

Up to the moment of Lancelot's leaving the courtyard of the Claxton's residence, until he had walked, indeed, for some little distance through the streets warmed by a liberal sun of early spring, good resolutions kept him company and steeled his heart against the sore temptation to see Cecil, anyhow, anywhere, so that it was at once!

He yielded to the weakness of straying afoot beyond

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the Barrière and finding his way to the outside of the smart, gold-tipped railings surrounding the little villa, whose ivied walls and trim garden enshrined the lady of his affections. There, he stood for some moments, eying the house like a hungry tramp, until a polite *sergent de ville*, coughing in his ear, suggested that the villa was private property; and discomfited Carlyle Bey was forced to carry his dignity farther along the avenue. A few steps took him into the leafy arcades of the Bois, where, for an hour, he wandered absorbed in thought, buoyant with hope when not tormented with uncertainty. In his preoccupation, he had come face to face with the artificial prettiness of the Cascade, without being aware of its vicinity, or of that of a lady, who, leaving her carriage and footman at a convenient distance, was slowly strolling along the driveway, and now stopped directly abreast of him. Her modish attire was contradicted by a veil of black gauze drawn closely over her face, and in the white contracted features seen underneath it, Carlyle had some difficulty in recognizing those of the Countess de Marbois.

“My luck hasn’t altogether left me, then!” she exclaimed, holding him with an imperious gesture. “Spite of your note again excusing yourself, I had made up my mind to see you at any cost, and came here to think over the best way of managing it. Oh! no evasions, no civilities. The time has passed for that between you and me. All the misery I ever brought upon you has come back to me, and you may easily triumph, if you will. I have, at least, done you one good turn, in pointing out how you could put yourself again into relation with a young



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person who apparently owes her mother neither duty nor sympathy in my terrible new grief."

"When I wrote my thanks to you, madam," answered her much-vexed but helpless captive, "I thought I had made it plain that, although I felt sincerely the distress of your bereavement, I could not undertake to transmit the news to Miss Dare, whom, as a matter of fact, I have not even seen since my arrival in Paris."

"In Heaven's name, what are you waiting for?" cried Molly Ball, forgetting the *mondaine* finish acquired by the Comtesse de Marbois. "But, of course, you'll do as you please; only I thought Cecil had better hear it from somebody she loves."

Lancelot, despite him, felt a throb of grateful recognition toward his persecutor.

"I will tell her, then, if an opportunity offers," he said impulsively, "but on condition that you do not again use me as an intermediary with your daughter on any subject whatever."

"Didn't I say I had washed my hands of you?" she said, with a harsh laugh. "But why should I care what Cecil knows or thinks? Her heart is hard, hard, like her father's, and if you get her, I wish you joy of your bargain."

"Is it for this you so wished to speak with me, may I ask?"

"I refuse to be taunted by you, Lancelot Carlyle. In two words, I want to impress on my daughter and the man who is willing to take her with her family's sins upon her head, that you have got always to keep faith with me, in not letting my husband know about my by-

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goness. No matter what comes, keep my secrets from him. And Cecil must never by word or deed hint to him the circumstances of her brother's end. My husband knows only that I had a son, whom he believes to have been killed, in honorable fight, before our marriage took place. Fancy what it is, will you, to carry the yearning despair for my boy's loss like a red-hot coal in my bosom, and never to give sign of it in daily life? I go, go into society, dress and bejewel myself, drive, dine, appear in public like a wax figure at that tiresome old man's side, and dare not let him know I mourn. Every hour of my day must be accounted for. Even this talk with you will have to be concealed by my paying these servants of his largely. He is inconceivably petty and jealous, and sometimes I think I would give it all up joyfully for one hour's gallop into the enemy's lines on Starlight, at the risk of my neck! Oh, I am as I was born, Colonel Carlyle, and you and Cecil and your kind can never remake me in your likeness! I have lived my life, and the worst mistakes I have made in the course of it were my marriages. If I had not been carried away by senseless ambition, if I'd had even ordinary judgment, I'd have thrown all this silly stuff in Paris overboard, and followed my lad to his exile and death! I'd have lived somehow, keeping near to an army, where I belong; above all, I'd have been near him, my lost, dishonored darling, to lay him in his traitor's grave!"

Lancelot again felt his pulses stir, despite him, at her passion and her pain. She had been speaking rapidly, always in an undertone, the shining equipage and horses, the smug servants of the Comte de Marbois,

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awaiting to reclaim her to their solvent and aristocratic protection. He thought he had never looked upon a being more driven, hounded by Fate, to an end yet undeclared.

"There! That's enough of whining," she said, interrupting herself. "Now, Colonel Carlyle, having given you and Cecil due warning how to keep your evil genius at bay, I'll be done with you for good and all."

"You are very kind to continue to embody my interests with Miss Dare's," he answered, a tinge of added color coming upon his brown face. "But without wishing to accentuate the rigors of the situation for myself, I should tell you that your daughter has not yet so much as consented to receive a visit from me, and I have more than good reason to fear I shall return to my post in Egypt having failed in an opportunity of explaining the hope that made me take prompt advantage of your letter."

"Stupid girl!" cried Molly Ball, stamping her foot, in her characteristic way. "Does she think that men like you grow upon every wayside bush? For I like you, Lancelot Carlyle, and I wish you well. I could always get on better with men than women. If I had a chance at Cecil I might yet prove myself your friend, by showing her what a little fool she is. But as long as she's under the thumb of that Claxton woman, I shan't demean myself to go near her, you may depend on that. Make her understand that you have her mother's solemn promise never to write or try to see her again, and she may relent, for she knows I can keep a pledge. But,

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if you'll just take my advice, you won't let Mrs. Claxton, with her endless fine-drawn notions, try to run this show. You'll follow your own instincts, go right away, straight as a die, to Cecil, and tell her you mean to marry her whether or no!"

Lancelot could not resist a smile.

"Oh, don't laugh at me, but act! I know women, I know Cecil. She just wants to have her conscience taken in hand for her. If you let her slip through your fingers this time, Lord knows when you'll catch her again, as independent as she is, and set up with that poor stick of a companion who'll hang on to her till the last gasp. Marry her, take her away with you to Egypt, anywhere, only be sure to keep her out of her own country till she's had time to forget the things that bothered her there and here. It isn't much I can do for my own child, nowadays, but I'll do this: I'll tell you that she's always been dead in love with you, since the night she first laid eyes on you at Foxcroft. Knowing this, in one of my rare, weak moments, I tried to bring you and herself together; and, believe it or not, as you please, since my darling died I've wanted to do something more to make up to you for the harm I did you. But you wouldn't have me on any terms, neither would Cecil, and, after all, it's chance that's been my friend and helped me to have my say."

Lancelot went with the Comtesse de Marbois to her carriage, put her into it, and at parting offered her his hand. But Molly Ball, oblivious of the discreet lackey who held open the door, chose openly to ignore his over-

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ture, and with a brusque nod of farewell, ordered her servants to drive on. His last glimpse of her face against the satin lining of her coupé, showed her grimly self-contained, her moment of unselfish abandonment already relegated to the thronged world of her bitter memories.

“Charming as the girl is, one can never forget she’s the daughter of Molly Ball.” Provokingly this bit of worldly wise comment from Colonel Claxton had lingered in Lancelot’s brain, and as he now wended his undecided way into the *Allée des Acacias*, kept his thoughts haunting company. He had, during the strange colloquy with the Comtesse, even found himself tracing out a resemblance between child and mother which it gave him a pang to recognize.

What, after all, was the sum of his real acquaintance with Cecil Dare? In actual fact, it might have been telescoped into a few hours. Her beauty and valor, the desperate appeal to his chivalry of her tortured spirit driven to bay, the rising of her invincible gaiety of youth over terrible circumstance, above all, her complete trust in him—then, her evanishment, like that of a picture thrown upon a screen—all these provocatives to a young man’s fancy made up the first chapter of his brief idyl. The second was an even shorter experience, a touch light as the flutter of a scarf of gauze. But, ah, how deep it went into the currents of his being! Her whisper of comfort had cheered the most galling moment of his life, had put heart into his worst ordeal, had soothed his bleeding pride, and enveloped him in a

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moral atmosphere making all sordid things seem far away and dim.

And, lastly, when she had so nobly come unsought to his prison to answer the cry of his heart for her! When he had slain her love that she could not hide in that crucial moment, and had sent her into the outer darkness of long months and years of blank separation!

Three meetings! Was that all? How, then, had she grappled his heart with such hooks of steel that he had been ready, at any moment since his freedom from the pledge to Mona, to link his life to Cecil's joyfully? Was not the feeling she inspired the best life had had to give him? What mattered anything if he could win her yet?

So reasoning (where reason plays no part) he condemned himself to a shameful repentance for the passing doubt of her inspired by his parting glimpse of the Comtesse de Marbois. His steps turning insensibly in the direction of the *Porte Maillot*, Carlyle found that he was again in the close vicinity of the little villa near the walls. He hovered a while at a respectful distance from the spot, solacing himself with the reflection that he was at least soon to meet her at dinner, and that it would be his own fault if she would not then consent to receive him on the morrow.

In the act of turning to go away from the gates of Paradise, there arose in his mind Mrs. Claxton's direful suggestion that Cecil might, even now, be meditating another final flight from him. He stopped short, appalled at the idea, retraced his way to her villa gates, hesitated, cursed his uncertainty, and, as if in a whisper from a

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celestial sphere, back flashed to him the homely words of Molly Ball—"Follow your own instincts, go right away, straight as a die, to Cecil, and tell her you mean to marry her, whether or no!"

When Lancelot rang the bell of the villa Bois Dormant, the little white-capped maid who answered its masterful summons came running in some alarm. So relieved was she by the apparition of nothing more intimidating than a very well-favored young officer, who asked for her mistress in admirable French, that she ushered him without ado into the garden at the rear of the dwelling, where Miss Dare and her companion happened to be at the moment, peacefully engaged in doing something to a flower-bed.

So, after all, it was Molly Ball who brought them together, since Cecil, advancing to meet him, first pale, then burning red, laid her hand in his, then with quiet dignity introduced him to her friend.

Over at last, the long uncertainty, the chilling, deadening silence, the fear both had cherished that they would never exchange speech again! They had met with constraint, she trying to conquer the wild fear of the hunted animal in her eyes as she faced him. They had talked of commonplace, her gaze gradually sinking before his, her breath coming quicker, the pure joy in her veins bubbling like the sap in the trees around them.

The little enclosure, where Cecil had been at work amid her daffodils and jonquils, was bright with sunshine and alive with nest-building sparrows. The cheerfulness and stir of a Paris afternoon were everywhere manifest

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beyond the gilded railings that shut them away from the busy boulevard. A horse-chestnut spread its tender green and rosy spires above her head. She had lost nothing of her imperial beauty, the shade of her wondrous hair was undimmed, her complexion dazzling as of old, but he was conscious that he would do almost anything in the world to bring back again her free and fearless bearing—to banish from her face that shrinking look born of another's shame.

She did not at first touch upon the interval thus ending, "after long grief and pain." She knew of him, and the proud new name he had won as a soldier, and her pride in it shone forth unrestrained by artifice. They talked while old Mademoiselle Rosine sat in a *berceau*, and knitted peacefully, and, by and by, the marvel came to pass that is so often worked by Mother Nature in behalf of her young. Two hearts trembling toward each other met in an interchange of looks, and, without premeditation, without effort, blended in the sweet eternal union of tried and tested love. He had come there to tell her how long he had wanted her, but did not need to speak words, and presently, Mademoiselle Rosine, looking over at them, became aware that something had passed between the handsome young officer and her beloved charge that brought a rush of glad tears into her dim old eyes and to her withered cheek a glow of vanished youth. And then, Cecil Dare, straightening her shoulders, threw off once and for all the burden she had borne, and knew herself to be the equal, honored and coveted, of the man she had loved so long!

When it was necessary for this abnormally pro-



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tracted first call to close, and for Carlyle Bey to arouse a slumbering *cocher* from his perch on a *fiacre* outside the gate, engaging to meet her at dinner with Mrs. Claxton (where Cecil owned to him she had not meant to go), Lance held Cecil's hand for a moment closely, looking into her eyes.

"You have not asked me how I ventured to come this afternoon."

"I never thought. It seemed so natural."

"Dearest, we have had our hour of pure sunshine, there is a sorrow yet in store for you. This letter, which you must read after I leave—it will hurt you, but you are brave—reached me in Egypt, a few days since, and was the cause of my coming to find you. It tells me, among other things, Cecil, of your brother's death in Mexico."

She quivered, but shed no tears.

"Once that would have been a bitter grief, but now—ah, poor Selden! It is the best news we could have of him, God help us! To think we loved each other so! It was good of you to come yourself to tell me."

The letter placed in her hand was not opened until her lover had gone out of her sight. Even then she lingered, loath to break the spell of the wondrous hours just past. At last, going away from the kisses and mute congratulations of Mademoiselle Rosine, she shut herself in her own room and took out of an envelope an enclosure addressed, to her dismay, in her mother's handwriting!

The fiery blood surged into Cecil's cheeks; she threw

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the letter on the floor. This horror to come between her and her moment of purest joy in life! Lance in communication with the Comtesse de Marbois, the bare thought of whom, in her insolent pomp of prosperity brought a fresh wave of humiliation to her child's heart! How dared she interfere between them? What mischief might she not have already wrought?

Ah! Cecil had had enough of the woman who had given her birth. Never, never would she willingly look upon her face again. And if she had juggled Cecil's affairs with Lancelot——!

The thought of Selden calmed her suddenly. Still trembling, but softened, she picked up the letter, and read these words:

“ LANCELOT CARLYLE:

“ I am a wretched woman deserted by one ungrateful child, and mourning in secret, where his existence is not known, the recent loss of the other. I have just heard that my son, the only person I ever loved, except myself, has died, no need to tell you how, under Juarez in Mexico. It was not a glorious death, but I would give all I possess to have been near him and to have received him in my arms. This letter is to inform you that although I do not desire to see her, I am willing now to contribute what I can to my daughter's happiness. I know you have long loved her, and that she has returned it, but that she would not a second time sacrifice you to me. If you are not ashamed to claim her, you will find Cecil at Villa ——, Avenue de Neuilly, Paris, living with an old frump of a chaperon who would drive me wild, ex-

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cept that she is a shade better than that sanctimonious Mrs. Claxton. Of course, you will not believe me, but this is what I had meant to tell you, when I begged you to come to me, and you gave me the go-by, a little while ago. I am writing to you while my heart is soft and sore about my boy. If I waited, I might readily repent. Begging that you will have the goodness to convey the tidings of my bereavement to Miss Dare, I have the honor to be, Monsieur Carlyle,

“Your obedient,

“MARY, COMTESSE DE MARBOIS.”

Again, Cecil laid her mother's letter down, but this time in a changed spirit. The crust formed upon her heart by hard and bitter feelings was melted in a gust of tender tears. A few moments later she was in a *fiacre* driving to the Hôtel de Marbois.

The interview between Molly Ball and her child was reported, but not in detail, to her friends, when Cecil arrived to dine with the Claxtons, wearing a plain black frock, to which a bunch of lilies of the valley, offered by Carlyle (who came forward to meet her, after her hostess had greeted her with a peculiarly radiant smile), was added on the left side of the corsage.

Carlyle looked, as he felt, surprised, and was, at first, not altogether pleased to hear of the disposition of the latter part of Cecil's afternoon. But a better feeling came to him, when he reflected that, all said, it was Molly Ball, and no other, who had drawn back the curtain sheltering the Holy of Holies he had won. He had also a sense that the threshold over which his bride-to-be had

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taken this decisive step was one never to be recrossed by her.

As to Mrs. Claxton, she quietly bubbled over with happiness and satisfaction in a result attained so unexpectedly, with an ease so apparent, that she could never help pluming herself upon her own superior share in the management of it. Lancelot and Cecil, who were married under her protecting wing but a few weeks later, did not think it necessary to rob her of the sweet illusion. Their love, over which mighty waters had passed without quenching it, was now grown into a light so strong, serene, and enduring, they could never believe it had flickered in the kindling. Lance proposed to return immediately to Egypt with his wife, and for some years to know no surcease in the active practise of his military life, Cecil gaily engaging to be perfectly resigned to following the drum in the career both he and she loved best, and eager to wear the laurels he must win.

## XVI



**A** GAIN in Richmond on a day of spring, the old blue sky arching overhead, around him the same redundance of buds and flowers and leafage that had greeted Private Lyndsay when he rode in with the conquering army in '65!

The smoke wreaths of the great fire had drifted into space, the crash and clatter of bursting shells had long died upon the ear, and save for the scarred voids in city blocks, and a general sense of inactivity unstirred by returning progress, Lyndsay saw little trace of the tremendous tragedy heralding his advent to the town.

He had had occasion to realize, upon previous visits, how deep-seated and dreary was the depression left by war. In the business relations formed as a property-holder in a neighboring county, where he had won golden opinions from squirearchy and employees around him, Lyndsay had sometimes touched despair of a higher level in the fortunes of Virginia in his time.

But to-day, for some occult reason, every aspect of Richmond was transfigured, and shone with a light that never was on sea or land.

Instead of pushing on to Goochland as his wont was upon arrival—to the Manor, where the Beatons were

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urgently anxious to exhibit to him a son and heir lately come to gladden their cheerful souls—he directed his footsteps into the street where he had once walked wearing a private's uniform, carrying a weapon for the defense of a young person who tripped ahead of him with lips compressed and a world of stern resolve in her soft dark eyes! How the very bricks of the old pavement joined together to sing of Mona as he passed! He could see her lithe figure hastening under the fire-flakes to the rescue of her threatened home, and feel again his first joy and wonder in her companionship!

Many months had elapsed since his last glimpse of her. Lyndsay had worked hard and prospered amazingly, and the people of his neighborhood at Airedale had lately elected him to represent them in the seats of the nation's legislators during the ensuing session of Congress.

He had grown broader in ways and knowledge of mankind, had roamed sufficiently in foreign lands to part with his shyness and occasional resentment of conventionalities that be. But whatever, in becoming a personage, Lyndsay had put aside or forgotten, nothing had robbed him of his high purpose, his stalwart determination, his clean mind, and the poetry of his nature. The bias given to his susceptible days of adolescence by the encounter with the Carlyles had ever since colored his thoughts, and still embodied for him all romance of the truer, tenderer sort.

That he had still kept his distance from Mona, with no attempt to bring forth the worship of her that had so long secretly possessed him, was esteemed by Mrs. Beaton

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a mystery unexplainably tormenting. From time to time the two had met, although never again at the Manor, and, on the occasion of what Mrs. Beaton called "a trip Nawth," to which the General and his spouse had treated themselves, inviting Miss Carlyle to accompany them—they had all stopped between two trains to take luncheon with Lyndsay at Airedale. If Mona had been delighted with the Airedale house, its situation, surroundings, and equipments, Mrs. Beaton quitted it, actually groaning that she could see no prospect of installing Mona there as its mistress. But the least hint on this subject to Mona had been always treated with discouraging reserve; and as to Lyndsay, Mrs. Beaton had long ago discovered there were certain subjects upon which neither playfulness nor serious appeal could pave the way to an approach to him. "He is not cross, he is not rude, when one speaks of his getting him a wife; he simply shuts up like a clam!" had declared the all-managing, but in this case unsuccessful, vicegerent of Carlyle Manor.

When Lyndsay ran up the high old house-steps where grass still grew in tufts between the marble slabs, and rang at the modern bell superseding the use of the dragon knocker upon the door, he became conscious of odd sounds proceeding from within. There was dance music rippling upon the air, a frou-frou of soft materials, the trip of little mice-like feet over a waxed floor, somebody beating time and counting one, two, three—a subdued murmur of children's happy voices accompanying all. At the rear of the spacious hall, its open door framed in green leaves against which their heads stood out in rich relief, sat a row of negro nurses,

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awaiting summons. Their dark brown or light taffy-tinted faces, their slender or portly persons, were no longer set forth by the "befo' de wah" turbans, kerchiefs, and aprons. Instead of these badges of former servitude, they wore smartly fashioned dresses and hats of cheap materials, reproducing the current styles, but all adjusted with taste and nicely considerate of hue. One might have thought the wearers a row of tulips adorning the old black settee in the corner of the hall.

And beyond this human *parterre*, Lyndsay caught a glimpse of his garden of old delights. It was unchanged, even to the trellised pergola with its trumpets of honeysuckle crowding in through the grape-vines, under which he had helped to carry Mona's mother for shelter from the fire. The shrubs and creepers he had trained and tended had grown luxuriantly, and against the ivied wall at the far end, he saw springing in white splendor the successors of those lilies into one of which the humming-bird had crept, to be imprisoned overnight.

But what was the meaning of the fairylike stir and the music in the still old house? A child's party Mona was giving for some little favorite?

Britannicus, older, grayer, with a deeper parentheses of wrinkles enclosing his shorn lips, came at this moment in answer to the visitor's ring. As he passed the bench of waiting nursery-maids, the veteran bowed like a courtier. The women giggled, whispered, and poked each other, amid flashing ivories and dancing eyebeams; for Britannicus was ever *persona grata* with the fair, as well as head elder in the religious club called "Lilies



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of the Valley," to which the elect of Richmond's dark society belonged.

When the old man saw who it was upon the front steps, his manner underwent a sudden change. He lost his jaunty tread, his head turned apprehensively in the direction whence the festal sounds issued, his countenance assumed an apologetic look. One would have thought him overcome with sudden inexplicable shame. He greeted Lyndsay with respectful affection as of yore, then hemmed and hawed, in answer to the query if Miss Carlyle were at home.

"Yaas, suh, Miss Mona's here, suh; I won't deceive you, Mr. Lyndsay. And she wouldn't miss you for the world and all," he answered, cordially, "but——"

Again that shamefaced glance toward the drawing-room. The music within had changed to a joyous march. The little footsteps became more audible, striking the floor smartly in time to it.

"They'se just about ending, suh," went on the man, "and if you'd not mind stepping into the library to wait for Miss Mona."

"A party of children, eh? Of course, I will not intrude, but will come back later."

"Not a party adzackly, Mr. Lyndsay, suh," was the pained answer.

Britannicus had by this time engineered the caller into the dusky library, and had waved him to a chair.

Upon a mahogany stand at Lyndsay's elbow stood a Chinese bowl of fresh rose-leaves, a pretty old-fashioned fancy of Southern homes that seemed to breathe of Mona's recent touch.

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"I might as well own up to you, Mr. Lyndsay," said the negro, standing before him. "This here bobberation of children in my mistiss's best parlor is a thing I advised agin, as long as I could speak. But," he swallowed once or twice, "Miss Mona, she gets sot in her way sometimes, and when Miss Rose Shirley—that's Miss Mona's partner, sir, in the business of making them fallals o' silk and satin they send Nawth—when Miss Rosy got this idea o' opening a dancing class for the children of their friends—only their own friends, Mr. Lyndsay——"

Here Britannicus was overcome again.

"A dancing class? I understand. Why, Britannicus, old man, don't be a fool at your time of life. It seems to me the prettiest of trades."

"Trades, suh, that's it. Trades don't agree with Carlyles. Them things we pack up and send away, where nobody knows who makes 'em, and the checks that comes back by mail, they're bad enough, Lord knows, but this——"

His mortified face set Lyndsay to laughing heartily. They were interrupted by Mona running in, with extended hand, to welcome her guest.

"I thought it was nobody's voice but yours," she exclaimed. "How glad I am you're in time to see our final march of the innocents! Do come to the door and take a peep at it. We *are* proud, Rosy and I, though she is the leading spirit, of what we have made the darlings learn."

A different Mona this from his stricken heroine of former days! A bright, alert Mona, healthily happy in

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her work, living for every day and for others, looking not back at the dead past, but pressing forward in constant effort to fashion her future cheerily. A beautiful Mona, too, he noted with jealous eyes: more lovely in her ripe development of young womanhood than ever in the time of her slender immaturity. A golden mist seemed to arise before Lyndsay's eyes while he followed her. He wondered if he were walking erect and steadily!

As she threw open the heavy door and beckoned him to stand behind her on the sill, he saw, under the eyes of pictured Carlyles upon the walls, an enchanting bevy of tiny lads and lassies, stepping hand in hand to the stately measure of Mozart's minuet from Don Juan—the boys bored, but acquiescent through necessity, the girls throwing their whole hearts into the task, quaint little gentlewomen acquitting themselves of this rhythmic exercise with a facility inherited from bygone generations. And in the center of the ring of human flowers, a fairylike maiden scarcely larger, though older in years than they, moved back and forth upon the waxed floor, light as a thistledown, posturing for them to imitate, watching their movements, adjuring and keeping them in place. And, at last, Rosy signed to Mona, who, breaking the circle, entered it, and the two dance mistresses posed and courtesied together. Then the pianist stopping with a sudden chord, the children came, two and two, to salute their teachers in farewell, and melted from the room!

Lyndsay thought he had never seen so charming a spectacle. When the babies, one and all, had been cap-

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tured by their attendants, hatted and coated and led away, and the old house was left to its repose, the three seniors sat down to rest and to talk it over. Britannicus, comforted by Mr. Lyndsay's sang-froid under this blasting revelation of the family's decadence, returned upon the scene, bearing a salver of glasses containing his own inimitable iced lemonade, with bobbing strawberries afloat.

While Miss Rose Shirley remained in the room to strengthen him, Lyndsay had felt encouraged to hope all things from the result of his coming interview with Mona. But when Rosy, astute in such matters as a genuine Virginian girl can be, withdrew under pretext of expediting a brocaded glove-box ordered for a wedding present in Philadelphia, his heart experienced a sudden woful drop.

He had spoken to Mona of his feeling for her, once before, soon after Colonel Lancelot had spurred away, like Lord Lovell in the ballad, "far countries for to see." It had been only a hint of his great love, light as a butterfly poising upon a flower. But Mona had turned upon him the sorrow of her starry eyes, and he had read there that his time had not yet come. Afterward, he had thought it best to remain away from her, meeting from time to time on the footing of good friends. Mona, who had at first repulsed him out of a complex feeling of disloyalty to her dead father and her dead Cause, had always kept what she felt about this action strictly to herself. No living soul was in her confidence. Mrs. Beaton, having found out what she knew, unknown to Mona, had long given up hope that

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the matter would come to anything, and, like a wise woman, held her tongue concerning her regrets. She had, indeed, continued to urge upon Lyndsay during his periodical visits to Virginia the desirability of marriage from every point of view. She had, also, with apparent innocence, caused other Southern girls of long ancestry and short purses to defile before him, without provoking in the young lord of the Manor the faintest show of interest. She had vainly wondered why he couldn't stir himself to find a wife "up Nawth." Lyndsay had proved impracticable, and Mrs. Beaton had perforce to be resigned.

Mona now regretfully believed that he, too, had long since acquiesced in the necessity of considering her only as his grateful beneficiary and friend.

She had never suspected the fact that Lyndsay, unwavering from her since the beginning, had credited her with giving up Lancelot, probably because of some confession of her cousin's feelings for Cecil Dare. He had pitied Mona profoundly, not venturing to allude to Lance again, and, like most other people, thought Mona was now only waiting till the Colonel had done with roaming and soldiering, and came home to marry her and "settle down."

Between Lyndsay and Cecil had sprung up a friendship dating from the time of their return together from Fort Delaware. On the deck of a Government propeller, aboard which their kind friend, the Commandant, had despatched the little party of contraband visitors back to the nearest station of the railway, Cecil had taken heart of grace and told him the true story of her pre-

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vious relations with Lancelot Carlyle. As honest as the day, she could not brook the suspicion in Donald's eyes, his evident discomfort in her society following her private interview with the prisoner.

And Lyndsay had responded to this confidence with a respectful sympathy that never wavered. Whatever he thought, he did not presume to read between the lines of her narrative. He continued, from first to last, always to speak to her of Lancelot as of Mona Carlyle's betrothed. But he had not failed to suspect the deeper feeling that had grown out of Cecil's long ministry to Lance's interests. And he had greatly feared that Lance shared this feeling, and would hold to his plight with Mona through honor only.

The break between Lance and Mona had, naturally, but served to fix this conviction in Lyndsay's heart. Through a correspondence with Cecil, later on, resulting from his discovery of the value of her property in Chicago, he had ascertained that she was still Madame de Chercroix's companion, with no thought of marriage or of any change in her mode of life. He knew from Lancelot's subsequent career that those two could not have met again after Cecil had quitted the prisoner behind his bars. And so, for Mona's dear sake, he had continually hoped that Lance might one day return to his first allegiance.

But here, within a day or two, had come from Lance an announcement that took the ground from beneath Lyndsay's feet, and from a staid, self-contained man of affairs, had converted him into an eager lover speeding in seven-league boots to woo and win his fair.

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It was never Lyndsay's way to lose time in dalliance when a purpose was to be carried out. He was pale and desperately in earnest. All the froth had been blown from his talk while Rose Shirley was in the drawing-room. Whatever was to be his fate, he courted the knowledge of it now. He fancied Miss Carlyle looked nervous, and had rather Rosy had remained. Mona, indeed, had seen that he intended going straight to his mark, and trembled away from him. But this was no longer the reserved and timorous suitor of former days, and half-frightened, wholly pleased, she saw also that she could not keep him back, so soon as he broached his subject.

"You have heard the news of your cousin Lancelot and Miss Dare?" he asked, eagerly, dreading what she would answer in his sick fear that she had been trying to hide pain.

"This very morning," she answered, her eyes clear as summer skies. "It is the most surprising, the most interesting, the most extraordinary—what would Madame de Sevigné have said?—certainly, the most unexpected piece of news that ever came to me! But you, who have seen Miss Dare, must make haste now, and tell me every little thing about my new cousin. By the same mail came letters from Mr. and Mrs. Claxton, who have taken her with them to stay, until Lance can get back again from Egypt for the marriage, which is to be in Paris very soon. Dick Claxton says she is the ideal soldier's bride, a perfect complement to Lance in looks and everything. I know, of course, all about her splendid service to Lance in prison and her visit there

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with you and Madame de Chercroix—but—why, Mr. Lyndsay——”

Mona brought her comments to a sudden halt. For Lyndsay, who had come there prepared to conduct his affair at a moderate rate of progress, was seized in the grip of a great rapture. Taking but one stride from his fiddle-back chair to hers, without premonition, he seized her two hands in a crushing grasp.

And this is what he said—the cold and reserved denizen of a northern clime, who had never before approached her save with far-away hints and Delphic sentences expressive of a feeling discreetly within bounds—he, whom she believed to be so well cured of the old fancy for her, that she had ceased allowing herself to think of the blessed possibility of change——!

“*You* can say this—*you* can think this? Then, heart of my heart, is not there hope for me? I, who from the first moment I walked like a spaniel at your heels, have been dying of love for you! I, who have waited—oh, how I’ve waited—and suffered!—oh, how I’ve suffered!—just because I thought you were expecting *him* to come back again some day! I knew, of course, that war business was as big as a house between us at the first. But it’s better now your people are seeing things differently. I’ve made friends with them; they trust me. And even if they didn’t, and you could care for me, what difference would anything—ought anything—to make between two people who have given each other honest love? It’s false, it’s cruel to let a dead issue stand in the way of a live love—such a love as you never dreamed of, if you’ll



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only let it have its way. I don't ask you to speak now, if you don't feel like it. Say not a single word, but just let me try—for God's sake, let me try."

He stopped with a great choking sob, and sank back upon his chair. He spoke truth. Mona had never seen anything like this.

She sat trembling, uncertain, overcome with her fears and sweet emotions. It cost her proud, reticent nature a thousand pangs to go out of herself so far as to tell him the whole truth. But if ever a man deserved it at a woman's hands, this faithful lover did. She moved slowly, shyly toward him, and Lyndsay, wondering if heaven were opening, took her into his arms.

Of the three couples whose life lines have crossed, mingled, and blended in this history, Lyndsay and Mona have been better known in their own country, have exerted a broader influence upon their generation, and have founded for themselves a line more typically American in the broader sense, than the others. For Lyndsay, the ladder of national fame was quickly mounted. His wife and sons have watched him ascend it, holding their breath with honest pride at his prompt and brilliant success. In his household, the union of North and South was an adumbration of the time to come when sectional America was to be lost in national America.

The Claxtons, to the regret of their friends at home, have lived chiefly abroad.

Lancelot and his splendid Cecil, after many wanderings, came back again to the theater of their stormy

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youth. The star of the Dares had set in the unhonored grave of Selden in Mexico; but when there were children to educate, the Carlyles made their principal headquarters at the Hall, never, like the Manor, to be restored to its pristine glory as a country house, but still, in decadence, more dear to its owner's heart than any spot distant from Virginian soil. Lance hung up in his great bare dining-room sundry trophies of battles fought under Lee and Gordon, and with these for ornaments, he and Cecil were content.

(2)

THE END



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## WHERE LOVE CONQUERS.

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### The Reckoning.

By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS.

The author's intention is to treat, in a series of four or five romances, that part of the war for independence which particularly affected the great landed families of northern New York, the Johnsons, represented by Sir William, Sir John, Guy Johnson, and Colonel Claus; the notorious Butlers, father and son, the Schuylers, Van Rensselaers, and others.

The first romance of the series, *Cardigan*, was followed by the second, *The Maid-at-Arms*. The third, in order, is not completed. The fourth is the present volume.

As *Cardigan* pretended to portray life on the baronial estate of Sir William Johnson, the first uneasiness concerning the coming trouble, the first discordant note struck in the harmonious councils of the Long House, so, in *The Maid-at-Arms*, which followed in order, the author attempted to paint a patroon family disturbed by the approaching rumble of battle. That romance dealt with the first serious split in the Iroquois Confederacy; it showed the Long House shattered though not fallen; the demoralization and final flight of the great landed families who remained loyal to the British Crown; and it struck the key-note to the future attitude of the Iroquois toward the patriots of the frontier—revenge for their losses at the battle of Oriskany—and ended with the march of the militia and continental troops on Saratoga.

The third romance, as yet incomplete and unpublished, deals with the war-path and those who followed it led by the landed gentry of Tryon County; and ends with the first solid blow delivered at the Long House, and the terrible punishment of the Great Confederacy.

The present romance, the fourth in chronological order, picks up the thread at that point.

The author is not conscious of having taken any liberties with history in preparing a framework of facts for a mantle of romance.

ROBERT W. CHAMBERS.

NEW YORK, *May 26, 1904.*

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D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

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## WORKS OF ROBERT W. CHAMBERS.

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Does anybody remember the opera of *The Inca*, and that heart-breaking episode where the Court Undertaker, in a morbid desire to increase his professional skill, deliberately accomplishes the destruction of his middle-aged relatives in order to inter them for the sake of practice?

If I recollect, his dismal confession runs something like this :

"It was in bleak November  
When I slew them, I remember,  
As I caught them unawares  
Drinking tea in rocking-chairs."

And so he talked them to death, the subject being "*What Really Is Art?*"  
Afterward he was sorry—

"The squeak of a door,  
The creak of a floor,  
My horrors and fears enhance;  
And I wake with a scream  
As I hear in my dream  
The shrieks of my maiden aunts!"

Now it is a very dreadful thing to suggest that those highly respectable pseudo-spinsters, the Sister Arts, supposedly cozily immune in their polygamous chastity (for every suitor for favor is popularly expected to be wedded to his particular art)—I repeat, it is very dreadful to suggest that these impeccable old ladies are in danger of being talked to death.

But the talkers are talking and Art Nouveau rockers are rocking, and the trousers of the prophet are patched with stained glass, and it is a day of dinkiness and of thumbs.

Let us find comfort in the ancient proverb: "*Art talked to death shall rise again.*" Let us also recollect that "*Dinky is as dinky does;*" that "*All is not Shaw that Bernards;*" that "*Better Yeates than Clever;*" that words are so inexpensive that there is no moral crime in robbing Henry to pay James.

Firmly believing all this, abjuring all atom-pickers, slab furniture, and woodchuck literature—save only the immortal verse :

"And there the wooden-chuck doth tread;  
While from the oak trees' tops  
The red, red squirrel on the head  
The frequent acorn drops."

Abjuring, as I say, dinkiness in all its forms, we may still hope that those cleanly and respectable spinsters, the Sister Arts, will continue throughout the ages, rocking and drinking tea unterrified by the million-tongued clamor in the back yard and below stairs, where thumb and forefinger continue the question demanded by intellectual exhaustion :

"L'arr ! Kesker say l'arr ?"

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